

Official Report of the  
One Hundred Fifty-eighth  
Annual General

# CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ  
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle  
Salt Lake City, Utah

**April 2 and 3, 1988**



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# THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 158th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 2, 1988, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, April 2 and 3, 1988. The general priesthood session was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, April 2, 1988, at 6:00 P.M.

President Ezra Taft Benson presided at all sessions of the conference. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, general priesthood, and Sunday afternoon sessions. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. In addition, the general sessions and priesthood session were carried via satellite transmission to more than one thousand stake centers. The general priesthood session was also carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately nine hundred locations in many countries.

## General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

*The First Presidency:* Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Thomas S. Monson.

*The Council of the Twelve:* <sup>1</sup>Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks,

M. Russell Ballard, and Joseph B. Wirthlin.

*The Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy:* Dean L. Larsen, Richard G. Scott, Marion D. Hanks, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Robert L. Backman, Hugh W. Pinnock, and James M. Paramore.

*Additional Members of the First Quorum of the Seventy:* Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, J. Thomas Fyans, Adney Y. Komatsu, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, Carlos E. Asay, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Royden G. Derrick, Robert E. Wells, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Jack H. Goaslind, Angel Abrea, John K. Carmack, Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag, John Sonnenberg, F. Arthur Kay, Keith W. Wilcox, Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, J. Richard Clarke, Hans B. Ringger, Waldo P. Call, Helio da Rocha Camargo, H. Verlan Andersen, George I. Cannon, Francis M. Gibbons, Gardner H. Russell, George R. Hill III, John R. Lasater, Douglas J. Martin, Alexander B. Morrison, L. Aldin Porter, Glen L. Rudd, Douglas H. Smith, Lynn A. Sorensen, Robert E. Sackley, and L. Lionel Kendrick.

*The Presiding Bishopric:* Robert D. Hales, Henry B. Eyring, and Glenn L. Pace.

*General Authorities Emeritus:* Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill, Bernard P. Brockbank, and Joseph Anderson.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>President Marion G. Romney and Elder John H. Vandenberg were excused due to ill health.

## Other authorities present

Other Church authorities in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples, bishops of wards,

and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

## FIRST DAY MORNING SESSION

The first general session of the 158th Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 2, 1988, at 10:00 A.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus with Robert C. Bowden conducting and Clay Christiansen at the organ.

Before the meeting, the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "Hark, All Ye Nations!" without announcement.

President Monson made the following remarks:

### President Thomas S. Monson

We welcome you this morning from the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in this, the first general session of the 158th annual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked me, Brother Monson, to conduct this session.

We welcome all who are participating in the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders Carlos E. Asay and Helio da Rocha Camargo are seated on the stand. We welcome also the many others who are

receiving these conference proceedings by satellite transmission, radio, cable, and television.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church, all of whom are in attendance except President Marion G. Romney and Elder John H. Vandenberg, who are excused. We also acknowledge the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies, who are seated on the stand. We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

The Mormon Youth Chorus, under the direction of Brother Robert C. Bowden, with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ, opened this session by singing "Hark, All Ye Nations!" The chorus will now sing the beautiful number, "O My Father." Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Bishop Robert D. Hales, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

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The chorus sang "O My Father."  
Bishop Robert D. Hales offered the invocation.

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### President Monson

We will now be privileged to listen to President Ezra Taft Benson, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

## President Ezra Taft Benson

My dear brethren and sisters, I thank the Lord that He in His kindness has per-

mitted me to join with you in another glorious general conference of the Church.

How I have been blessed as a result of your faith and prayers during the past few months.

My heart has been touched as I have learned of the many children, youth, and adults of the Church whose lives are being changed by the study of the Book of Mormon. You are helping to cleanse the inner vessel. God bless you for it.

## Love and obey the Lord

*The great test of life* is obedience to God. "We will prove them herewith," said the Lord, "to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them" (Abraham 3:25).

*The great task of life* is to learn the will of the Lord and then do it.

*The great commandment of life* is to love the Lord.

"Come unto Christ," exhorts Moroni in his closing testimony, "... and love God with all your might, mind and strength" (Moroni 10:32).

This, then, is the first and great commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30; see also Matthew 22:37, Deuteronomy 6:5, Luke 10:27, Moroni 10:32, D&C 59:5).

It is the pure love of Christ, called charity, that the Book of Mormon testifies is the greatest of all—that never faileth, that endureth forever, that all men should have, and that without which they are nothing (see Moroni 7:44–47, 2 Nephi 26:30).

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren," pleads Moroni, "pray unto the Father with all the energy of [your] heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him" (Moroni 7:48).

In the closing accounts of both the Jaredites and the Nephites, Moroni records that except men shall have this pure love of Christ, called charity, they

cannot inherit that place which Christ has prepared in the mansions of His Father nor can they be saved in the kingdom of God (see Ether 12:34, Moroni 10:21).

The fruit that Lehi partook of in his vision and that filled his soul with exceeding great joy and that was most desirable above all things was the love of God.

## Loving God requires total commitment

To love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength is all-consuming and all-encompassing. It is no lukewarm endeavor. It is total commitment of our very being—physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually—to a love of the Lord.

The breadth, depth, and height of this love of God extend into every facet of one's life. Our desires, be they spiritual or temporal, should be rooted in a love of the Lord. Our thoughts and affections should be centered on the Lord. "Let all thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord," said Alma, "yea, let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever" (Alma 37:36).

## Put God first

Why did God put the first commandment first? Because He knew that if we truly loved Him we would want to keep all of His other commandments. "For this is the love of God," says John, "that we keep his commandments" (1 John 5:3; see also 2 John 1:6).

We must put God in the forefront of everything else in our lives. He must come first, just as He declares in the first of His Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3).

When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives. Our love of the Lord will govern the claims for our affection, the demands on our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our priorities.

We should put God ahead of *every-one else* in our lives.

## Joseph, Nephi, and Job put God first

When Joseph was in Egypt, what came first in his life—God, his job, or Potiphar's wife? When she tried to seduce him, he responded by saying, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9).

Joseph was put in prison because he put God first. If we were faced with a similar choice, where would we place our first loyalty? Can we put God ahead of security, peace, passions, wealth, and the honors of men?

When Joseph was forced to choose, he was more anxious to please God than to please his employer's wife. When we are required to choose, are we more anxious to please God than our boss, our teacher, our neighbor, or our date?

The Lord said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:37). One of the most difficult tests of all is when you have to choose between pleasing God or pleasing someone you love or respect—particularly a family member.

Nephi faced that test and handled it well when his good father temporarily murmured against the Lord (see 1 Nephi 16:18–25). Job maintained his integrity with the Lord even though his wife told him to curse God and die (see Job 2:9–10).

The scripture says, "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12; see also Mosiah 13:20). Sometimes one must choose to honor Heavenly Father over a mortal father.

## God's concern for our eternal welfare

We should give God, the Father of our spirits, an exclusive preeminence in our lives. He has a prior parental claim on our eternal welfare, ahead of all other ties that may bind us here or hereafter.

God, our Father, Jesus, our Elder Brother and our Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost, the Testator, are perfect. They know us best and love us most and will

not leave one thing undone for our eternal welfare. Should we not love them for it and honor them first?

There are faithful members who joined the Church in spite of the objections of their mortal relatives. By putting God first, many later became the instruments to lead those loved ones into the kingdom of God.

Jesus said, "I do always those things that please [God]" (John 8:29).

## Putting God first in our homes

What is the condition in our homes? Are we striving to put the Lord first and to please Him?

Fathers, would it please the Lord if there were daily family prayer and scripture reading in your home? And what about the holding of weekly home evenings and periodically having individual time with your wife and each child? And if your child went temporarily astray, do you think it would please the Lord and He would honor your efforts if you continued to live an exemplary life, consistently prayed and frequently fasted for that child, and kept the name of that son or daughter on the temple prayer roll?

You mothers, who are especially charged with the righteous rearing of the youth of Zion, are you not putting God first when you honor your divine calling by not leaving the homefront to follow the ways of the world? Our mothers put God first when they fill their highest mission within the walls of their own homes.

Children, do you pray for your parents? Do you try to support them in their noble endeavors? They will make mistakes like you, but they have a divine mission to accomplish in your life. Will you help them do so? Will you add honor to their name and bring comfort and support to them in their older years?

## Temple marriage pleases God

If someone wants to marry you outside the temple, whom will you strive to please—God or a mortal? If you insist on a temple marriage, you will be pleasing



the Lord and blessing the other party. Why? Because that person will either become worthy to go to the temple—which would be a blessing—or will leave—which could also be a blessing—because neither of you should want to be unequally yoked (see 2 Corinthians 6:14).

You should qualify for the temple. Then you will know that there is no one good enough for you to marry outside the temple. If such individuals are that good, they will get themselves in a condition so that they too can be married in the temple.

### **Bless others by putting God first**

We bless our fellowmen the most when we put the first commandment first.

"Whatever God requires is right," said the Prophet Joseph Smith (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 256)—and so Nephi slew Laban. And God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac.

Had Abraham loved Isaac more than God, would he have consented? As the Lord indicates in the Doctrine and Covenants, both Abraham and Isaac now sit as gods (see D&C 132:37). They were willing to offer or to be offered up as God required. They have a deeper love and respect for each other because both were willing to put God first.

### **Choosing to obey brings happiness**

The Book of Mormon teaches that "it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things" (2 Nephi 2:11)—and so there is. Opposition provides choices, and choices bring consequences—good or bad.

The Book of Mormon explains that men "are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil" (2 Nephi 2:27).

God loves us; the devil hates us. God wants us to have a fulness of joy as He has. The devil wants us to be miserable as he is. God gives us commandments to

bless us. The devil would have us break these commandments to curse us.

Daily, constantly, we choose by our desires, our thoughts, and our actions whether we want to be blessed or cursed, happy or miserable. One of the trials of life is that we do not usually receive immediately the full blessing for righteousness or the full cursing for wickedness. That it will come is certain, but oftentimes there is a waiting period that occurs, as was the case with Job and Joseph.

In the meantime the wicked think they are getting away with something. The Book of Mormon teaches that the wicked "have joy in their works for a season, [but] by and by the end cometh, and they are hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence there is no return" (3 Nephi 27:11).

### **Be patient and trust God's promises**

During this testing time the righteous must continue to love God, trust in His promises, be patient, and be assured, as the poet said, that—

Who does God's work will get God's pay,  
However long may seem the day,  
However weary be the way.  
No mortal hand, God's hand can stay,  
He may not pay as others pay,  
In gold, or lands, or raiments gay,  
In goods that perish and decay;  
But God's high wisdom knows a way,  
And this is sure, let come what may—  
Who does God's work will get God's pay.  
(Anonymous)

I testify to you that God's pay is the best pay that this world or any other world knows anything about. And it comes in full abundance only to those who love the Lord and put Him first.

*The great test of life* is obedience to God.

*The great task of life* is to learn the will of the Lord and then do it.

*The great commandment of life is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30).*

May God bless us to put the first commandment first and, as a result, reap peace in this life and eternal life with a fulness of joy in the life to come, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The chorus sang "The Morning Breaks" without announcement.

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## President Monson

It has been our privilege to listen to the opening address of our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson.

Following his remarks, the Mormon Youth Chorus sang for us the beautiful hymn of the Restoration, "The Morning Breaks."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

## Elder Neal A. Maxwell

Thank you, President Benson, for that sermon on the first commandment, and even more, for the way in which you implement it by your expressions of your love for all of us.

### Keep prophecies in perspective

Brothers and sisters, over the sweep of Christian history, some believers have, by focusing on a few prophecies while neglecting others, prematurely expected the Second Coming. Today, while we are obviously closer to that great moment, we are in the same danger.

On the other hand, smugness is also a real danger. Of Jesus' first advent, the smug said, "It is not reasonable that such a being as a Christ shall come" (Helaman 16:18). Declared Jesus of His second coming, "Take heed . . . lest . . . that day come upon you unawares" (Luke 21:34; see also Matthew 24:37–38, Luke 21:35, Revelation 3:3, D&C 45:26).

Peter wrote of the smug skeptics who would say, "Where is the promise of his coming," for do not "all things continue as they were from the beginning" (2 Peter 3:4)?

Some prophecies, such as the return of Jewish people to Israel, were decades in their fulfillment (see Ezekiel 39:27). Other prophecies can be fulfilled in a compressed period of time. Taking the

restored gospel "for a witness" to all the nations of the world involves generations (Matthew 24:14), but a "desolating scourge" can cover the land quickly (D&C 5:19). Sadly, more than one qualifying possibility already exists for such scourges (see Mark 13:10, D&C 5:19). The blossoming of the desert "as the rose" involved substantial time, yet significant moral decay can happen within a single generation—whether in a nation or in a family (see Isaiah 35:1; Helaman 6:32, 11:36, 12:4).

The Middle East has been at the intersection of human history so many times! Yet in our time the words of Zechariah are especially descriptive, saying that Jerusalem is to be "a cup of trembling" for "all the people round about" and "a burdensome stone for all people" (Zechariah 12:2–3).

Hence the need to keep our eyes on more than a few leaves of the fig tree in order to know when "summer is nigh" (Matthew 24:32). By analogy, it is one thing to notice strong ocean breakers crashing against the shore, heralding another oncoming storm, and quite another to discern the powerful movements on the ocean's quake-jarred floor foretelling a terrible tidal wave.

In the context of such cautions, I have no hesitancy in saying that there are some signs—but certainly not all—suggesting that "summer is nigh"

(Matthew 24:32). We would do well to notice and to ponder but without either becoming preoccupied or ignoring any sprouting leaves because of being “overcharged” with the “cares of this life” (Luke 21:34).

### **Wickedness in the last days**

We are told, by way of example, that some conditions preceding the second coming of the Savior will be as in the days of Noah (see Matthew 24:37–39) and “also as it was in the days of Lot” (Luke 17:28). Noah’s time was one of disobedience and wickedness. People were uncomprehending and “knew not until the flood came” (Matthew 24:39; see also Genesis 6:5, 1 Peter 3:20). The choking cares and pleasures of this life led to the general rejection of Noah’s prophetic message. Two especially interesting words are used in the Bible to describe Noah’s time: *violence* and *corruption* (see Genesis 6:11). Violence and corruption, seldom strangers to the human scene, appear to be increasing today.

Some of the coarseness and cruelty present at the time of Noah will be replicated, for “the love of many shall wax cold” (Matthew 24:12). Also, peace will have been “taken from the earth” (D&C 1:35).

Peter wrote of how “the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah” until, as other scriptures advise, the wickedness exceeded that among all God’s creations (1 Peter 3:20; see also Moses 7:36). A very cruel society existed, one “without affection” in which people hated “their own blood” (Moses 7:33). Given the abuses by humans of other humans, in His longsuffering, God waited as long as even He could.

Those in Lot’s day ate, drank, bought, sold, planted, and builded amid gross wickedness (see Luke 17:28), vexing Lot with their “filthy conversation,” or, as it says in the Greek, they “oppressed [him] by [their] outrageous behavior” (2 Peter 2:7<sup>b</sup>). In their grossness, there was also gross neglect of the poor (see Ezekiel 16:49).

Our time already reflects yet another prophecy: “Distress of nations, with perplexity” (Luke 21:25). Before modern times, global perplexity simply was not possible. Now there is a quick transmission of some crises and problems from one nation to others—the consequences of debt-ridden economies, the spreading of diseases, the abuse of narcotics, and, perhaps most of all, a shared sense of near-helplessness in the face of such perplexities. Today, the assembled agonies of the world pass in reminding review on the nightly news.

### **The Church’s growth and a great division**

In the last days, happily, the Church will grow extensively, with its membership being “scattered upon all the face of the earth” (1 Nephi 14:14). Nevertheless, its dominions will still be comparatively “small” because of “wickedness,” which will close the ears of many to the gospel message (1 Nephi 14:12).

There will also be “a great division among the people” (2 Nephi 30:10; see also D&C 63:54). This stressful polarization will, ironically, help in the final shaking of that strange confederacy, the “kingdom of the devil,” in order that the honest in heart, even therein, may receive the truth (2 Nephi 28:19).

This “great division” is what President Brigham Young also saw, saying, “It was revealed to me in the commencement of this Church, that the Church would spread, prosper, grow and extend, and that in proportion to the spread of the Gospel among the nations of the earth, so would the power of Satan rise” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 13:280).

### **Prophecies should help us prepare, not weigh us down**

Happily, even though the world worsens around us, there will be many, many fine and wonderful men and women of all races and creeds—and of no religious creeds at all—who will continue to lead decent and useful lives. Besides, as

Mormon said, scriptural commentary on declining conditions is not communicated "to weigh thee down," but, instead, to help us live so that Christ may "lift thee up" (Moroni 9:25).

Thus, what I have said is not said in alarm at all, but, rather, so that we might be noticing and preparing. Prophecies are given, in part, that we "might know and remember" that these things "had been made known . . . beforehand, to the intent that [we] might believe" (Helaman 16:5). Today's inattentive people will be like an earlier, desensitized people who "began to forget those signs and wonders which they had heard, and began to be less and less astonished, . . . and began to disbelieve all which they had heard and seen" (3 Nephi 2:1; see also 1 Peter 3:17). If faithful, brothers and sisters, we lose nothing, even if, happily, like the ancient Ninevites, today's mortals were to repent.

### Honor covenants

So let us look at ourselves. For the Church, the scriptures suggest both an accelerated sifting and accelerated spiritual and numerical growth—with all this preceding the time when the people of God will be "armed with righteousness"—not weapons—and when the Lord's glory will be poured out upon them (1 Nephi 14:14; see also 1 Peter 4:17, D&C 112:25). The Lord is determined to have a tried, pure, and proven people (see D&C 100:16, 101:4, 136:31), and "there is nothing that the Lord thy God shall take in his heart to do but what he will do it" (Abraham 3:17).

How can we, as individual members of the Church, survive spiritually if we do not honor our covenants? How can we survive spiritually if we break outright the covenants made at the time of baptism or in the holy temples? How can we be on the Lord's side during the "great division" if we mirror the world's materialism and selfishness (2 Nephi 30:10)?

### The righteous need not fear

Members of the Church need not and should not be alarmists. They need not be deflected from quietly and righteously pursuing their daily lives, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7).

In 1836, the Prophet Joseph pled with the Lord "to confound, and astonish, and to bring to shame and confusion, all those who have spread lying reports abroad, over the world" (D&C 109:29). As a people, we were so blessed recently, and we will be again.

True, the enemies and the critics of the Lord's work will not relent; they only regroup. Even among the flock, here and there and from time to time, are a few wolves, wearing various styles of sheep's clothing—ironically, just before the shearing season! A few defectors and "highminded" traitors (2 Timothy 3:4) even go directly to the "great and spacious building" to hire on (1 Nephi 8:26). There recruits are celebrated and feted until—like their predecessors—they have faded into the dark swamps of history. As President Heber C. Kimball said, divine justice will eventually require that they "pay all the debt of [all] the trouble that they have brought upon the innocent" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 5:94).

Thus, there is no need to be surprised, nor to fear, when certain conditions come upon mankind. Furthermore, the Lord has given to us some remarkable assurances about the Restoration's lead Prophet and the restored Church:

"Behold, that seer will the Lord bless; and they that seek to destroy him shall be confounded" (2 Nephi 3:14) "in mine own due time" (D&C 71:10).

"And the righteous need not fear, for they are those who shall not be confounded. But it is the kingdom of the devil . . . who need fear, and tremble, and quake" (1 Nephi 22:22, 23).

### Rewards for the faithful

If we are faithful and obedient while in this good and beautiful world, we will

later inherit "a far better land of promise" (Alma 37:45), "a city . . . whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10), a city within which are "many mansions" (John 14:2; see also John 14:3).

Paul wrote, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man [meaning we cannot even imagine], the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

The spiritually submissive will make it through. The word of God will lead the man and the woman of Christ "in a strait and narrow course across that everlasting gulf of misery" (Helaman 3:29) and land their souls at the right hand of God in the kingdom of heaven, "to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the holy prophets who have been ever since the world began" (Alma 7:25; see also Ether 12:4).

Those who have overcome the world will themselves then be overcome by the generosity of the Father, as the Father shares "all that [the] Father hath" (D&C 84:38). The faithful will hear those special words, "Enter into the joy of [your] Lord" (D&C 51:19), for "they who have endured the crosses of the world, and despised the shame of it, they shall inherit the kingdom of God, . . . and their joy shall be full forever" (2 Nephi 9:18).

The light that Lamoni received "infused such joy into his soul" (Alma 19:6). Yet, incomparable incandescence lies ahead, for "the day cometh . . . [when] all things shall be revealed . . . which ever have been . . . and which ever will be" (2 Nephi 27:11).

Here in mortality we already know moments when, "because of the great goodness of God," there is a "gushing out of many tears" (3 Nephi 4:33). Our joy is brim (see Alma 26:11). Yet this is but a foretaste of the ultimate homecoming, when our cups will not only be brim, but will run over without ceasing!

The gospel's sure samplings tell us even now, in Jacob's words, of "things as they really will be" (Jacob 4:13), like beautiful, beckoning postcards from that "far better land"! (Alma 37:45).

## The Lord leads us

Meanwhile, perhaps "summer is nigh" (Matthew 24:32; D&C 35:16, 45:37). We are here in mortality, and the only way to go is through; there isn't any around! Yet our Deliverer assures us: "be of good cheer, for I will lead you along. The kingdom is yours and the blessings thereof are yours, and the riches of eternity are yours" (D&C 78:18).

Brothers and sisters, it is my testimony to the Church that the Lord will lead us along, just as promised. He balances giving to the Church and its people the needed, specific directions, with providing the relevant learning experiences, including having our faith and patience tried in order to be strengthened. Thus He leads us along, but He desires that during that process we take His yoke upon us in order to learn of Him by our personal experiences. We surely feel the weight of that yoke at times, but the path is clear.

Jesus, our Shepherd, has "marked the path and led the way, And ev'ry point defines" ("How Great the Wisdom and the Love," *Hymns* [1985], no. 195). His clearly defined footprints are easy to see. They are pressed distinctly and deeply into the soil of the second estate, deeply and distinctly because of the enormous weight which pressed down upon Him, including the awful burden of all of our individual sins.

Only He could have carried it all.

I thank the Savior personally for bearing all which I added to His hemorrhaging at every pore for all of humanity in Gethsemane. I thank Him for bearing what I added to the decibels of His piercing soul-cry atop Calvary, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## President Monson

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

The chorus and congregation will now join in singing "Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel," following which Elder

James M. Paramore, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will address us.

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The chorus and congregation sang  
 "Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel."

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## Elder James M. Paramore

### Seek the blessings of the Church

My beloved brothers and sisters, I love you very much. A few days ago, I attended a program celebrating the 146th anniversary of the Relief Society established by the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr. Until then, I did not have a feeling or inspiration about what I wanted to say at conference. As I sat in that meeting attended by over three hundred sisters and saw the outstanding presentation—the choir of mothers and children singing and the testimonies of half a dozen of those sisters about the joys and goodness that had come into their lives because of Relief Society—I knew what I wanted to say to you today. And that is to seek the blessings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Listen to some of their comments in that meeting about the Church and its organization.

One sister said: "I will never forget the first time the missionaries took me to church in the little branch in my home town of Santa Rosa, Philippines. I had never heard of Relief Society before, but those dear sisters encircled me in the arms of love."

Another sister said: "Sisterhood has taken on a whole new meaning for me. Several years ago my husband died suddenly, and I felt as if my world had collapsed around me. But just as suddenly, I was surrounded by a wonderful circle of sisters who helped bear my burden. They are always there. Our weekly trips to the temple bring such peace and comfort into my life. I rejoice in this sweet sisterhood."

Truly, they were no more strangers, but fellow citizens with the Saints (see Ephesians 2:19). They were members of

His church—the kingdom of God on earth.

As I sat in that meeting, I thought about what the Church had done for me, my wife, my family, the people in wards I had lived in, the poor and the needy among us, and the whole human race. Those few minutes that day touched my spirit, and I felt like a child who had discovered a treasure. There were feelings within me that I cannot fully explain, but I recognized what the Church had done to bless my life and everyone around me who had truly accepted it and become involved in it.

### The Church helps us become "new creatures"

Central to everything that Christ would have us understand and receive is the great power that comes to us when we draw close to Him through our acts, our compassion, and our personal change in becoming like Him. Our passage here on this earth is a proving ground, a period of growth and choice, and a time "to prepare to meet God" (Alma 12:24). He has given us His Spirit to guide us and His truth and His church to influence us to recognize these powers and use them. One great man in Book of Mormon days who fought against these principles and teachings of the Church was Alma the Younger, who was struck dumb and, after the Church spent days of fasting and prayer, was revived and spoke these words:

"For, said he, I have repented of my sins, and have been redeemed of the Lord; behold I am born of the Spirit.

"And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and

women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters;

“And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God” (Mosiah 27:24–26).

Alma had become a new creature, born of the spirit. He then went forth with conviction to build the kingdom of God upon the earth through the teachings of Christ and the establishment of His church—the very Church of Christ that he had condemned and ridiculed. The Church is necessary to help us to change our lives, to become new creatures.

### **Memories of blessings of the Church**

As I contemplate the blessings of the Church in the lives of the sons and daughters of God, a hundred memories flood through my mind, memories such as—

- The times I personally spent in Primary, Sunday School, priesthood, MIA, and seminary with young men and women growing up where activities were always within the bounds the Lord had established and where eternal truths were taught and retaught to strengthen and to truly provide us with a means to measure truth and error.

- The time, years ago, when we lived in a large ward with many young families—an area called Morningside Heights. (We actually renamed it Morning Sickness Heights because there were so many young families.) As bishop, I had the blessing of interviewing between sixty and seventy eight-year-old children for baptism. I don’t remember one child who didn’t love the Savior or who didn’t understand and live the law of tithing. This was one of the blessings bestowed by faithful parents and wonderful teachers from Primary and Sunday School in the Church.

- The time I heard about an LDS police chief who was honored as the outstanding police officer in California, who said, “All I know about organization is

what I’ve learned in the Church. I’ve organized my police force just like my stake. I have a high council and bishops organized all over the city. I don’t call them by that name, but they are there just the same.”

- The experiences in the Church when I saw my wife and daughter and dozens of other women go into a home on a regularly scheduled basis to help an autistic child learn how to crawl.

- The time I saw a weeping father, who had been activated, stand in our stake conference with his arms around two sons and say, “Where would we be without the Church?”

### **The Church is essential to salvation**

On and on and on it goes. The Church of Jesus Christ is the organization that the Savior established when He personally walked upon the earth in Palestine and later in America and in 1830 when He reestablished it upon the earth to perfect and exalt all mankind. The Church and its functions are indispensable to the plan of God.

- The Church provides all of the teachings of the Savior.

- The Church exercises the authority from heaven, beginning with a prophet of God and extending down to every family.

- The Church provides the saving ordinances of the gospel, including holy, eternal endowments and sealings in the house of God, a fulness of all that the Father has.

- The Church provides brotherhood and sisterhood with others, wherever they are upon this earth. A member of the Church is immediately a part of a community of God with friends. It is a refuge from the world, with watchcare and accountability for every member.

- The Church helps us to overcome selfishness and uncertainty by serving others in dozens of ways over a lifetime. Some of our fondest memories go back to those associations we have had in service together.

- The Church is a way of life and has established organizations and cultural and

developmental opportunities for ourselves and our children that are the envy of this world. Loving leaders and teachers provide warmth, security, activities, music, theater, and athletics, as well as the teachings of the Savior to help us learn how to love Him, to try to be like Him, and to serve others. Our seven-year-old grandson has, through the Primary and the example of his father, found the wonder and blessing of the New Testament and now carries his little edition around, reading it often.

- Our young women are trying to put faith, prayer, individual worth, knowledge, choice, accountability, integrity, the divine nature, and good works into their lives to get understanding about their future roles in this world and forever. Through many service projects they share their lives, their testimonies, and their influence to help others come unto Christ.

A young man in Michigan several years ago fell in love with an LDS girl. He was told forthrightly and with great love that she wanted the power of the priesthood in her home and the blessings of an eternal family, and she would only marry someone who could give her those blessings. The teachings she had received had taken root, and the seeds of faith, knowledge, and choice had grown, and she knew that they were true. The young man felt her spirit and agreed to be taught the gospel.

And after he had learned that the gospel was true, his father would not approve his baptism. A great shepherd, a bishop of the young girl, went to the father and helped him to see the value of that young woman, her standards, the Church, and the really truly important things in life. The father was touched that day as he attended the baptism and saw about twenty young men and women of the Church. Following the service, he asked that the missionaries come teach him. A young woman had taken on the divine nature and was able to share the priceless truths with others.

- And what about our young men, all men actually, as they learn how to exercise the priesthood of God? George Romney, former governor of Michigan

and former president of American Motors, once said this to young men in a stake conference:

"Boys, I want to tell you something. I have never had a degree in business administration from any business school. What success I have had in the business world I owe to the training I have received in this church."

Recently, we learned a very valuable lesson from our President, Ezra Taft Benson, about the value of the Church in his own life and in the lives of boys. He spent many years early in his married life teaching our young boys as a Scoutmaster, learning and sharing with them in a hundred ways. And we saw the results a few months ago as nearly all of those Scouts he had led assembled and stood in this Tabernacle—a witness of what had been done for them in this church. Yes, the Church is the instrumentality of God. It is essential to the salvation of mankind.

### **An anchor for the soul**

Listen to what President David O. McKay said about the Church: "Every phase of [the Church] seems to me applicable to the welfare of the human family. When I consider the quorums of priesthood, I see in them an opportunity for developing that fraternity and brotherly love which is essential to the happiness of mankind. In these quorums and in the auxiliaries of the Church I see opportunities for intellectual development, for social efficiency. In the judicial phase of the Church I see ample means of settling difficulties, of establishing harmony in society, of administering justice, and of perpetuating peace among individuals and groups. In the ecclesiastical organization, I see an opportunity for social welfare such as cannot be found in any other organization in the world.

"Thus does Christ and his Church become my ideal, my inspiration in life. I think it is the highest ideal for which man can strive. . . .

"... I know of nothing else in the world that can even approach Christ's Church as an anchor for the soul" (*Treasures of Life*, comp. Clare Middlemiss



[Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1962], pp. 3-4).

### Church service sanctifies the soul

Now, may I invite all within the sound of my voice to seek the blessings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—its important, eternal blessings, its programs and activities, its opportunities to serve and to be of one heart and one mind—and to seek the peace the Savior promised. The First Presidency has extended a special invitation to all who, for whatever reason, may have gone astray from the Church, to come back, to come home, for you are needed and we love you. The Lord and His church will bless you and your families—even into eternity.

Let us all seize every opportunity to serve in His church, with full intent and with great desire, for that is what expands and perfects and sanctifies the soul. The words of the Lord given in February 1829 capture the spirit and heart of how to serve in the Church:

"Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with

all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day" (D&C 4:2).

Beloved brothers and sisters, this is the Lord's church, to which we are highly privileged to belong. We are part of it. It blesses our lives. May we capture the true spirit intended by the Lord and be anxiously engaged with others in seeking the blessings of the Church. I know with all the strength of my soul that it is true, that it is God's instrument to help us to become like His Son, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The chorus sang "Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me" without announcement.

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### President Monson

Elder James M. Paramore, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has addressed us, followed by the Mormon Youth Chorus singing "Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me."

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our next speaker.

## Elder L. Tom Perry

### "To be in the world"

"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but . . . ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world" (John 15:19).

From the teachings of the Savior we have adopted the common saying in the Church, "to be in the world, but not of the world." Normally, when this saying is used, we are emphasizing our need to stay free from sin and materialism which are so prevalent in the world in which we live. Of course, this is important—we should continually remind ourselves to keep our lives in harmony with the Lord's laws. For today, however, I would like to address the first part of the expression: "to be in the world."

It is "in the world" where we have the privilege of coming and enjoying a mortal experience. It is "in the world" where we are tested and tried. It is "in the world" where we have opportunities to participate in sacred, saving ordinances which will determine our postmortal life. It is "in the world" where we have opportunity to serve and make our contribution to mankind. It is to this world the Savior must come.

### Obligations while in the world

Our prophets of this day have encouraged us to be mindful of our obligations while we are here "in the world." President David O. McKay has said:

"The responsibility of showing to the world that the gospel of Jesus Christ will solve its problems rests upon the men who make the claim. . . . I believe, too, that every world problem may be solved by obedience to the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. . . ."

"The solution of the great world problems is here in the Church of Jesus Christ. Ample provision is made not only for the needs of individuals, but also for the nation and groups of nations. I realize that it is a great claim. . . . It is simply the application of God's plan to the world problems. You who hold the priesthood have greater responsibility today, now that you live in this creative moment in the world's history, than ever the Church has had before. I repeat it. If we make the claim to hold the truth, it is obligatory upon every Latter-day Saint so to live, that when the people of the world come, in answer to the call, to test the fruit of the tree, they will find it wholesome and good.

"The Lord help us to be able to prove to the world that we possess just what the world today is longing for, and when they see it, may they know, as you know, as I know, that the everlasting gospel is a light to the world" (*Gospel Ideals* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953], p. 5).

### Daniel's example

I found a classic example in the Old Testament of one who lived "in the world" and influenced it through his righteous living. The birth of this young man came at a time in history when it was improbable that anyone from Israel could make much of a contribution in the world.

After the death of King Solomon in 975 B.C., the Ten Tribes revolted and separated themselves from the Tribe of Judah. A divided Israel was not able to hold its own against the other powers of that region. Egypt and Assyria would take turns overrunning the land of Israel. In the year 607 B.C., Assyria proper and the northern provinces fell into the hands of the Medes, while Syria lay open to be seized by the Babylonians.

While this struggle was going on, it seemed an appropriate time for Egypt to attack Palestine. The king of the Babylonians sent his son, Nebuchadnezzar, to drive the Egyptians back. While the battle raged against the Egyptians, the king passed away and Nebuchadnezzar became the ruler of Babylon. He was successful against the Egyptians and became ruler over all of Syria to the Egyptian border. He ruled by terror, crushing his enemies by fire and sword, and weakening them with deportations to other parts of his empire.

It was in the midst of this battle-torn era that Daniel was born. As a youth, he and certain other Hebrews were taken into the court of Nebuchadnezzar for service. They were chosen because of their wisdom and knowledge and ability to learn. Thus, Daniel was brought into a strange land with strange customs, a strange environment, and a very different religious heritage. (See Daniel 1.)

Daniel's first test in being "in the world" came when the servant of Nebuchadnezzar ordered him to drink of his wine and eat of the "king's meat." Daniel "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank" (Daniel 1:8).

The servant argued that the king had made him responsible for training these young men, and had commanded they should eat and drink the same as the others. If they did not, the king would see that they were growing weak and thin, and would surely have the servant killed. Then Daniel begged that he and his friends be allowed to follow the health habits that had been given to them. His request was that they be proved for ten days; for ten days they would feed upon grains and drink water, to see if they were not healthier than all the rest.

Daniel's strategy was most interesting. He did not challenge the beliefs of the Babylonians. Instead, he volunteered to conduct a test as to which way was best. The servant agreed to the test. For the next ten days, Daniel and those who were with him ate and drank only of the

things that they knew they should. At the end of the tenth day, Daniel and his friends were found to be healthier and stronger than all the rest. Daniel soon found that he did not have to adopt a different standard of values when he was "in the world."

### **The Lord blesses the obedient**

I remember that as a young executive many years ago, part of my job involved attending dinners sponsored by different business groups. Each dinner was always preceded by a social hour. I felt very uncomfortable in these settings. After the first one or two dinners, I started coming late to miss the social hour. My boss thought this was not a good practice because I was missing valuable time associating with business leaders. Still, I felt awkward visiting in groups where I was the only one without a drink in my hand. I kept wondering what to do with my hands. You can always put one hand in your pocket, but you look a little foolish with both of them there. I tried holding a glass of 7-Up, but it had the appearance of an alcoholic beverage.

Finally I went over to the bartender and asked him if he had any drink that was distinctively different in appearance from an alcoholic beverage. He went into the kitchen and came back with a half gallon of milk and poured me a glass. Pouring a glass of milk at a cocktail hour was a unique event. It seemed to attract the attention of everyone, and I became the target of a lot of jesting. It embarrassed me at first, until I discovered that I was meeting more business leaders than I had at any previous gathering. I found that I did not have to violate Church standards to become a viable, contributing member of my chosen profession. It was more the case that success came because I *did* adhere to my values.

It soon became a practice at the social hours in that community to always have a carton of milk on the bar. I was amazed, as time passed, by how many of my associates were joining me for a glass of milk during the hour that we spent

together. I found, just as Daniel did, that being different in the world brought some interesting reactions, but obedience to the Lord's law is always associated with His blessings. Isn't that the message of the revelation contained in the Doctrine and Covenants?

"There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—

"And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated" (D&C 130:20–21).

### **Reach out to share the gospel**

In addition to being obedient to the word of the Lord, we have been instructed in our responsibilities to declare the gospel to *all* of our Father in Heaven's children. Again in the Doctrine and Covenants we read:

"The worth of souls is great in the sight of God; . . .

"And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth!

"Wherefore, you are called to cry repentance unto this people.

"And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

"And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!" (D&C 18:10, 13–16).

I don't know how we can experience this joy if we are not willing to reach out beyond our own circle of church friends. We live "in the world" during our mortal experience. The Christian principles, which the gospel teaches, are needed in all we do and among all peoples.

### **Extend influence outward**

The spheres of influence we can radiate from our associations can make

worthwhile contributions in the world. A righteous example can attract others to living a standard which has been established by the Lord for the conduct of His children here in mortality. It can be a source of bringing souls to the light of the gospel, causing some to join the Church, while others do not. Embracing the gospel is a personal decision, and we always respect and understand the rights of individuals, but how can we ever expect the world to embrace the righteous principles the Lord has declared to govern His children here if we do not extend our influence outward?

How our governments need standards of integrity! How our communities need yardsticks to measure decency! How our neighborhoods need models of beauty and cleanliness! How our schools need continued encouragement and assistance to maintain high educational standards! Rather than spend time complaining about the direction in which these institutions are going, we need to exert our influence in shaping the right direction. A small effort by a few can result in so much good for all of mankind.

### **Meet opposition with faith and courage**

Sometimes I think we fear participation because of the opposition we may face. We find again in the example of Daniel someone who met the opposition of being "in the world" head-on and was able to influence those around him for good. As Daniel's talents were recognized by the king, he became a trusted counselor. Many were jealous of the position this outsider had obtained, and they sought to do away with him. They devised a new law that would prevent Daniel from praying to God, the Eternal Father. The penalty for breaking the law was to be cast into the lion's den. Daniel was discovered praying, and the penalty was executed. But because of Daniel's faith in God, the lions inflicted no harm on him.

Even with the challenges that were continually before Daniel to live his

religion, he was able to rise above the conflicts that came before him. The Lord blessed and protected him in his service.

Not only did Daniel's service benefit the king, but because of the faith that Daniel had in the Lord, it affected an entire land. The king sent forth a proclamation that all the people of the kingdom should worship the true and living God, the God that Daniel worshiped. How mighty was the power of the service of one righteous man, affecting so many, as he served "in the world" in which he lived! How effective will be the results of our service if we will continue to serve in our own personal way "in the world" in which we live!

May we have the necessary faith to place our trust in the Lord and not worry about the forces that will surely oppose righteousness. May we have the courage to move forward in the cause of truth.

### **Make the world a better place**

As we live "in the world," may we contribute by making it a better place because of our righteous living, our service in causes that are just, and our faith that good will ultimately triumph over evil.

This is the Lord's work in which we are engaged, I witness to you in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The chorus sang "Lord, Accept Our True Devotion" without announcement.

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### **President Monson**

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has spoken to us, following which the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "Lord, Accept Our True Devotion."

President Howard W. Hunter, Acting President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker for this session.

## President Howard W. Hunter

### Importance of the Resurrection

On this beautiful and sacred Easter weekend, surely no doctrine will be the subject of more sermons nor the object of more praise than that of the atoning sacrifice and the literal resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so it should be at Easter and at every other season of the year, for no doctrine in the Christian canon is more important to all mankind than the doctrine of the resurrection of the Son of God. Through him came the resurrection of all men, women, and children who have ever been—or ever will be—born into the world.

In spite of the great importance we place upon the Resurrection in our doctrine, perhaps many of us may not yet have fully glimpsed its spiritual significance and eternal grandeur. If we had, we would marvel at its beauty as did Jacob, the brother of Nephi, and we would shudder at the alternative we would have faced had we not received this divine gift. Jacob wrote:

“O the wisdom of God, his mercy and grace! For behold, if the flesh should rise no more our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the Eternal God, and became the devil, to rise no more” (2 Nephi 9:8).

Surely the Resurrection is the center of every Christian’s faith; it is the greatest of all of the miracles performed by the Savior of the world. Without it, we are indeed left hopeless. Let me borrow the words of Paul: “If there be no resurrection of the dead, . . . then is our preaching vain, . . . and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ. . . . If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins” (1 Corinthians 15:13–15, 17).

### Christ’s last teachings

Go with me back in time to those final scenes in the Holy Land. The end of our Lord’s mortal life was near. He had healed the sick, raised the dead, and

expounded the scriptures, including those prophecies of his own death and resurrection. He said to his disciples:

“Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,

“And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again” (Matthew 20:18–19).

There in Jerusalem, the Sadducees accosted him and questioned him concerning the Resurrection. They had conspired to trap him, but he taught them the simple truths of the living gospel.

“Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God?” he asked.

“I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

“And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine” (Matthew 22:31–33).

Later, as they met to celebrate the Passover, Jesus and his Apostles partook of the sacramental emblems that he initiated in this last supper together, and then walked to the Mount of Olives.

Always the teacher to the very end, he continued his discourse on the theme of the sacrificial lamb. He told them he would be smitten, and that they would be scattered as sheep without a shepherd (see Matthew 26:31). “But after I am risen again,” he said, “I will go before you into Galilee” (Matthew 26:32).

### Jesus’ sufferings for us

In the hours that followed, he sweat drops of blood, was scourged by the very leaders who claimed to be custodians of his law, and was crucified in the company of thieves. It was as King Benjamin in the Book of Mormon prophesied: “He shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh

from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people. . . .

" . . . He cometh unto his own, that salvation might come unto the children of men; . . . and even after all this they shall consider him a man, and say that he hath a devil, and shall scourge him, and shall crucify him" (Mosiah 3:7, 9).

We are indebted to the prophet Alma for our knowledge of the full measure of His suffering: "He shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people.

"And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7:11-12).

Think of it! When his body was taken from the cross and hastily placed in a borrowed tomb, he, the sinless Son of God, had already taken upon him not only the sins and temptations of every human soul who will repent, but all of our sickness and grief and pain of every kind. He suffered these afflictions as we suffer them, according to the flesh. He suffered them all. He did this to perfect his mercy and his ability to lift us above every earthly trial.

### Prophecies of the Resurrection

But there remained one more set of chains to be broken before the Atonement could be complete: the bands of death. The prophets of the Old Testament had taught that the Resurrection would be certain and would be universal. Also, the Book of Mormon prophets taught the doctrine of the Resurrection with great plainness. Nephi wrote:

"Behold, they will crucify him; and after he is laid in a sepulchre for the space of three days he shall rise from the dead, with healing in his wings; and all

those who shall believe on his name shall be saved in the kingdom of God" (2 Nephi 25:13).

And Samuel the Lamanite prophesied to the Nephites:

"For behold, he surely must die that salvation may come; yea, it behooveth him and cometh expedient that he dieth, to bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, that thereby men may be brought into the presence of the Lord" (Helaman 14:15).

Enoch was shown in a vision the day of the coming of the Son of Man:

"And the Lord said unto Enoch: Look, and he looked and beheld the Son of Man lifted up on the cross, after the manner of men;

"And he heard a loud voice; and the heavens were veiled; and all the creations of God mourned; and the earth groaned; and the rocks were rent; and the saints arose, and were crowned at the right hand of the Son of Man, with crowns of glory;

"And as many of the spirits as were in prison came forth, and stood on the right hand of God; and the remainder were reserved in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day" (Moses 7:55-57).

### The day of Christ's resurrection

As the dawn of that third day was beginning, Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary" had come to the sepulchre in which his lifeless body had been laid. Earlier, the chief priests and the Pharisees had gone to Pilate and persuaded him to place a guard at the door of the sepulchre, "lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead" (Matthew 27:64). But two mighty angels had rolled the stone from the door of the tomb, and the would-be guards had fled in terror at the sight.

When the women came to the tomb, they found it open and empty. The angels had tarried to tell them the greatest news ever to fall on human ears: "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said" (Matthew 28:6).

The resurrection of Jesus was followed immediately by the resurrection of other righteous souls. Matthew records that "the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

"And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many" (Matthew 27:52-53).

### **The Lord's appearances after his resurrection**

In the days that followed his resurrection, the Lord appeared unto many. He displayed his five special wounds to them. He walked and talked and ate with them, as if to prove beyond a doubt that a resurrected body is indeed a physical body of tangible flesh and bones. Later he ministered to the Nephites, whom he commanded to "arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world.

"And . . . the multitude went forth, and thrust their hands into his side, and did feel the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet; and this they did do, going forth one by one until they had all gone forth, and did see with their eyes and did feel with their hands, and did know of a surety and did bear record, that it was he, of whom it was written by the prophets, that should come" (3 Nephi 11:14-15).

### **"Seek this Jesus"**

It is the responsibility and joy of all men and women everywhere to "seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have [testified]" (Ether 12:41) and to have the spiritual witness of his divinity. It is the right and blessing of all who humbly seek, to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit,

bearing witness of the Father and his resurrected Son.

### **Testimony**

As one called and ordained to bear witness of the name of Jesus Christ to all the world, I testify at this Easter season that he lives. He has a glorified, immortal body of flesh and bones. He is the Only Begotten Son of the Father in the flesh. He is the Savior, the Light and Life of the world. Following his crucifixion and death, he appeared as a resurrected being to Mary, to Peter, to Paul, and to many others. He showed himself to the Nephites. He has shown himself to Joseph Smith, the boy prophet, and to many others in our dispensation. This is his church; he leads it today through his prophet, Ezra Taft Benson. Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Monson**

President Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us. We are very proud of him.

We are grateful to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Mormon Youth Chorus will now sing "Jesus, Lover of My Soul."

The benediction will be given by Elder J. Thomas Fyans of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and then this conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

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The chorus sang "Jesus, Lover of My Soul."

Elder J. Thomas Fyans offered the benediction.

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## FIRST DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The second general session of the 158th Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 2, 1988, at 2:00 P.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by the Ricks College Centennial Choir. Florence Bowman conducted, and Robert Cundick was at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Hinckley made the following remarks:

### **President Gordon B. Hinckley**

My brethren and sisters, President Benson has asked that I conduct this meeting, the second general session of the 158th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome all who are in attendance or who are participating by means of the broadcast resources available to us, including those in stake centers throughout the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico. We express our appreciation to the owners of the broadcast facilities who have offered their services and for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

We note that Elders Paul H. Dunn and Rex C. Reeve are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall.

The music for this session will be provided by the Ricks College Centennial Choir, under the direction of Sister Florence Bowman, with Brother Robert Cundick at the organ. The choir's presentation will begin the centennial celebration for Ricks College.

The choir will open this session by singing "Sing Praise to Him." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Wm. Grant Bangerter, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

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The choir sang "Sing Praise to Him."

Elder Wm. Grant Bangerter offered the invocation.

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### **President Hinckley**

The Ricks College Centennial Choir will now sing "A Song of Praise." Following that, President Thomas S. Monson will present to you the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

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The choir sang "A Song of Praise."

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## Sustaining of Church Authorities and Officers

### **President Thomas S. Monson**

My brothers and sisters, I shall now present to you the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

It is proposed that we sustain President Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church

of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Gordon B. Hinckley as First Counselor in the First Presidency; and Thomas S. Monson as Second Counselor in the First Presidency. Those in favor may manifest it. Those opposed may manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain Marion G. Romney as President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, Howard W. Hunter



as Acting President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, and the following as members of that council: Marion G. Romney, Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, and Joseph B. Wirthlin. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain the Counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain Robert Edward Sackley and Larry Lionel Kendrick as additional members of the First Quorum of the Seventy to serve for a period of five years and sustain all other General Authorities as at present constituted. All in favor, please signify. Those opposed may manifest it.

Sister Dwan J. Young has accepted a call to accompany her husband to his assignment as president of the Canada Calgary Mission. It is therefore necessary to release her as general president of the Primary Association. We also release her counselors, Virginia B. Cannon and Michaelene P. Grassli, and all members of the Primary General Board. All who

wish to join in an expression of appreciation to these sisters for their dedicated, effective service may now do so by the uplifted hand.

It is proposed that we sustain Sister Michaelene P. Grassli as general president of the Primary Association with Betty Jo Nelson Jepsen as first counselor and Ruth Broadbent Wright as second counselor. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain all of the other General Authorities and general officers of the Church as at present constituted. Those in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed, by the same sign.

President Benson, it appears that the voting has been unanimous in the affirmative. We invite the newly sustained General Authorities and General Primary Presidency to take their places on the stand.

### **President Gordon B. Hinckley**

Brother Wilford G. Edling, who has served long and faithfully as the head of the Auditing Committee of the Church, will make the report of that committee, following which Brother F. Michael Watson, secretary to the First Presidency, will present the statistical report of the Church for the year 1987.

## **The Church Audit Committee Report for 1987**

### **Wilford G. Edling**

For the purpose of evaluating the adequacy of controls over receipts and expenditures of the general funds of the Church and its controlled organizations, we have reviewed the system of budgeting, accounting, and auditing, and the related financial statements of the Church for the year ended December 31, 1987, and the manner in which funds are received and expenditures are controlled.

Expenditures of general Church funds for the year were authorized by the First Presidency and were made in compliance with budgetary procedures. The

budget is authorized by the Council on Disposition of Tithes composed of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric. The Appropriations Committee, in weekly meetings, administers major expenditures under the budget.

The general fund accounts of the Church are maintained by its Finance and Records Department, which uses modern accounting technology and equipment to keep abreast of the rapidly expanding and varied activities of the Church.

The Auditing Department, which comprises a staff of certified public

accountants and similarly qualified auditors, and which is independent of all other departments, performs financial audits, operational audits, and audits of computer systems employed by the Church. These auditing services are performed on a continuing basis for Church departments and other Church-controlled organizations engaged in worldwide operations, including missions, schools, administrative offices, and departmental activities. The extent and scope of the Auditing Department services in safeguarding the resources of the Church are expanding to encompass the growth and widening activities of the Church.

The audits of local funds of wards and stakes are performed by stake auditors. The audit procedures are established and the audit reports are reviewed by the Church Auditing Department. Incorporated businesses owned or controlled by the Church for which accounts are not maintained in the Finance and Records Department are audited by the Church's

internal auditors, independent professional auditing firms, or government regulatory agencies.

Based on our review of the system of financial controls within the Church, together with continuing discussions with personnel of the Finance and Records and Auditing departments, we are of the opinion that budgeting, accounting, and auditing controls are adequate for Church needs and purposes, and that in all material respects the general funds of the Church received and expended during the year ended December 31, 1987, have been controlled and accounted for in accordance with established Church policy and procedures.

Respectfully submitted,

Church Audit Committee

Wilford G. Edling

David M. Kennedy

Warren E. Pugh

Merrill J. Bateman

Ted E. Davis

## The Church Statistical Report for 1987

### F. Michael Watson

For the information of the members of the Church, the First Presidency has issued the following statistical report concerning the growth and status of the Church as of December 31, 1987. (Membership figures include estimates based on 1987 reports available prior to conference.)

### Church units

Number of stakes .....	1,666
Number of districts .....	379
Number of missions .....	205
Number of wards .....	10,907
Number of branches in stakes ....	2,812
Number of branches in missions..	2,287
Number of sovereign countries with organized wards or branches .....	97

Number of territories, colonies,  
and possessions with  
organized wards or branches.... 25  
(These statistics reflect an increase of 44  
stakes and 617 wards and branches during  
1987.)

### Church membership

Total membership at the  
close of 1987..... 6,440,000

### Church growth during 1987

Increase in children of record .....	99,000
Children of record baptized .....	75,000
Converts baptized .....	227,284

### Missionaries

Full-time missionaries ..... 34,750

### Prominent members who have passed away since last April

Elder Franklin D. Richards, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy; Camilla Eyring Kimball, widow of President Spencer W. Kimball; Elva Taylor Cowley, widow of Matthew Cowley, former member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; Alexander Schreiner, Tabernacle organist for fifty-three years; Louise W. Madsen, former counselor in the General Relief Society Presidency.

### President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Edling and Brother Watson. I should just like to say that the Audit Committee, which is chaired by Brother Edling, comprises independent, nonemployed Church members who are men of wide business experience and familiar with financial operations.

Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now be our first speaker.

## Elder David B. Haight

### The Church brings forth good fruit

I have prayed for the blessings of heaven to be upon my efforts in speaking to you today.

Matthew's New Testament account includes these words of the Savior: "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit" (Matthew 7:17), and "by their fruits ye shall know them"—whether they be good or evil (Matthew 7:20).

As Michael Watson was reading the annual report confirming the continued growth and expansion of the Church throughout the world, with an increasing number of new converts making possible more stakes and more wards with their increasing numbers of priesthood holders and women in their organizations, and with our growing numbers of missionaries making possible more new missions, I felt a burning in my soul—a feeling of divine affirmation and direction of this work as it comes "forth out of obscurity" (D&C 1:30).

This is the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, and it does indeed bring forth fruit worthy of him. Its growth will continue unabated because of the faith of its members and because more men and women are discovering the golden threads of truth, hope, and salvation as they learn gospel principles and are "nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way, . . . relying . . . upon

the merits of Christ, who [is] the author . . . of their faith" (Moroni 6:4).

Outside of our church, many watch in amazement at this consistent expansion in spite of popular secularism. We hope they may one day know of the joy and happiness available to the Saints who hold fast to the iron rod of gospel truth (see 1 Nephi 11:25), which they treasure as dearly as life itself and which they maintain by their abiding faith.

We see the light of the gospel continuing to dawn like a gentle new day upon previous intolerable darkness. It continues to spread out into new frontiers, confirming the revelation to Joseph the Prophet that "the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape" (D&C 1:2) and all hearts shall be penetrated.

The gospel breathes a new life and a new hope and a new and unknown holiness into a troubled world. This we see, and we see the work grow and increase and become more and more irresistible as it spreads like the gentleness of a sea that refreshes the shore upon which it flows.

### Fearless preaching of early Apostles

Witnessing this miracle continuing to unfold today, I liken it to the account in Acts where Peter and other Apostles were preaching of Jesus, and the high priests'

council and the Sadducees tried to restrain them from speaking and teaching of Christ by putting them in prison. But an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, and again they went to the temple to teach the people. Gamaliel, a Pharisee and doctor of the law, halted the council when they would again cast the Apostles in prison, saying:

"Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

"But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

"And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak . . . the name of Jesus, and let them go.

"And they departed, . . . rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer . . . for his name" (Acts 5:38-41).

And—true to their callings as special witnesses of Christ—the Apostles went "daily in the temple, and in every house, they [continued] to teach and preach Jesus Christ" and him crucified (Acts 5:42).

The early Apostles fearlessly continued to preach the principles of the gospel, as we do today, calling upon mankind to believe in the Son of God, our Savior, and to repent—to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins, and to receive the Holy Ghost in preparation to have administered unto them even higher ordinances of the gospel. Those early disciples declared to those seeking truth, in plainness, that as the Holy Ghost rested upon them, filling their hearts with joy, they would know of the doctrine for themselves, whether it be of God or man.

## Develop spirituality

The Spirit of truth leads men to righteousness, but we must have a desire to seek truth and to take the time to form spiritual habits and respond to spiritual impressions if we are to keep our souls alive—and is not now the time to begin?

A person who has developed spirituality may suffer deeply and know

frustration; but yet he is able to continue in showing forth kindness and love because of a power that rises up from his spiritual base that governs his actions and urges him to "speak with a new tongue" (2 Nephi 31:14), as Nephi said, and to be his best despite obstacles and setbacks.

## Testimony of Christ

My desire is to aid the cause of truth and righteousness and, like the Apostles of old, to add my witness of the divinity of Jesus the Christ.

Tomorrow is Easter! Christians everywhere will commemorate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though the anniversary date may not be accurate, the Easter season should inspire us to study and reflect upon the infinite and eternal atonement of Christ—"the first-fruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20). The resurrection of Jesus from the tomb is the most glorious of all messages to mankind.

I believe in Christ. As a Latter-day Saint, I believe in Christ with all my heart. We invite all to "come unto Christ, and be perfected in him," as Moroni declared, "and deny yourselves of all ungodliness" (Moroni 10:32). Without reservation, we declare he is the Son of God and the Savior of the world.

Joseph Smith, the first prophet of this dispensation, wrote:

"We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

"We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel" (Articles of Faith 1:1, 3).

We believe that Christ came into the world to ransom mankind from the temporal and spiritual death brought into the world by the fall of Adam, that through the shedding of His innocent blood all mankind are raised in immortality and that those who believe and obey His laws are raised unto eternal life.

Salvation is administered on the same terms and conditions in all ages. Men must have faith in him, repent of

their sins, be baptized in his name, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and remain steadfast to gain life eternal.

### King Benjamin's vision of Christ

The Lord God has sent his holy prophets among all men in all ages to declare these things, even as he does today (see Mosiah 3:13).

King Benjamin, a Book of Mormon prophet, was instructed by an angel sent by the Lord to declare unto his people the coming of the Messiah more than one hundred years before Christ's birth, "that they may also be filled with joy" (Mosiah 3:4). This holy prophet declared:

"For behold, the time cometh, . . . that . . . the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity, . . . shall come down from heaven among the children of men. . . .

"And . . . he shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, . . . even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; . . . blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people.

"And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, . . . the Creator of all things from the beginning; . . .

"And lo, he cometh . . . that salvation might come . . . through faith on his name; . . . [but] they shall consider him a man, . . . and shall scourge him, and . . . crucify him.

"And he shall rise the third day from the dead" (Mosiah 3:5, 7-10).

### New Testament witnesses of the Resurrection

King Benjamin had learned in a vision that Christ would atone for the sins of mankind and judge the world. New Testament narrators, who were actual witnesses, confirmed King Benjamin's prophetic declarations with this brief account:

Before daylight the second morning following Christ's crucifixion, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, having prepared fresh spices and

ointments, went to the tomb of Jesus and found that the stone had been rolled away. Looking in and not finding the body, they hurried to find Peter and the Apostles and told them what they had found. Peter and John hastened at once to the tomb. John outran his older companion. Stooping down, he gazed in silent wonder into the empty tomb. Entering, Peter saw the burial clothes lying where the body of Jesus once lay. John followed him. And in spite of fear, there dawned upon them the hope, which later would become an absolute knowledge, that Christ had indeed risen; but as yet no one had seen him. The two wondering Apostles returned to their brethren.

Mary had stayed at the tomb and was grieving at the entrance when someone approached. Thinking it was the keeper of the garden, she asked where he had laid her Lord. Jesus said to her, "Mary" (John 20:16).

Jesus himself was standing before her, but he did not appear as she had known him, for he was now risen and glorified. She then recognized our Lord and must have attempted to embrace him, for he said, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17).

Filled with amazement, she hastened to obey, and repeated that glorious message which would give hope through all future ages and to which she added her personal declaration that she had seen the risen Lord. (See John 20:1-18.)

### Other testimonies of Christ

"The debt is paid, the redemption made, the covenant fulfilled, justice satisfied, the will of God done," wrote President John Taylor, "and all power is now given into the hands of the Son of God—the power of the resurrection, the power of the redemption, [and] the power of salvation" (*The Mediation and Atonement* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News Co., 1882], p. 171).

Hundreds of years before Christ's earthly ministry, the prophet Isaiah,

foretelling of the establishment of Zion and speaking of Jehovah, the true God, wrote:

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: . . .

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: . . . and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:4-5).

These thoughtful words from a favorite Mormon sacrament hymn express our heartfelt gratitude for our Savior:

There was no other good enough  
To pay the price of sin.  
He only could unlock the gate  
Of heav'n and let us in.

Oh, dearly, dearly has he loved!  
And we must love him too,  
And trust in his redeeming blood,  
And try his works to do.  
("There Is a Green Hill Far Away,"  
*Hymns* [1985], no. 194)

### God blesses those who obey him

I repeat our Lord's ageless admonition, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

Innumerable blessings have been promised to those who are faithful and obedient to God's laws. Once a person is true and obedient to the light and knowledge received, he not only develops the ability to use that which has been given, but the capacity to receive more knowledge increases, for he now understands and appreciates the gift.

People learn obedience by being obedient. We see its fruits. Halfhearted obedience is without reward. The gospel invites vigorous participation in living its principles. God commands that we serve him with all our heart, with all our might, with all our strength, and with the very best of our intelligence.

Our Savior instructs us, "Thy vows shall be offered up in righteousness on all days and at all times" (D&C 59:11).

### Know God through obedience

If we could feel or were sensitive even in the slightest to the matchless love of our Savior and his willingness to suffer for our individual sins, we would cease procrastination and "clean the slate," and repent of all our transgressions.

This would mean keeping God's commandments and setting our lives in order, searching our souls, and repenting of our sins, large or small. It means loving our neighbor, living an exemplary life, and—high on the list—being good husbands and good wives. It means teaching our children, by example and precept, to walk in the ways of truth and soberness. It means being honest in our affairs, and serving others, which includes sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world, and—with love—to succor those in need.

It is my hope that we will all come to know and love our Lord through obedience to his Word sufficiently to qualify for inclusion in the blessed circle of those who have heard of and believed his precious words uttered in the Garden of Gethsemane, his last night in mortality: "And this is life eternal," he said, "that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3), to which I add my witness in his holy name, amen.

### President Hinckley

Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Angel Abrea, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder Angel Abrea

### The false security of doing nothing

The story is told that on one occasion a traveler asked a farmer who was seated in the doorway of his humble cabin, "How's the cotton crop going to be this year?"

The farmer replied, "There won't be any. I didn't bother to plant it because I was afraid of the boll weevil."

Upon hearing this, the traveler asked further, "Well, are you going to harvest a big corn crop?"

"It's the same," came the response. "I was afraid we wouldn't get enough rain for the kernels to mature."

The traveler pursued, "At least you will have a good potato harvest!"

"Nope. Not any; I didn't dare plant them because I was afraid of insects."

With frustration, and somewhat impatiently, the traveler then asked, "Well, what is it that you have planted?"

"Nothing, my good man," came the answer. "I'd rather be safe than sorry."

The response from the farmer is a good example of a false security arising from fear and lack of conviction. It is an illusion of security resulting from uncertainty and confusion, an imaginary safe route definitely confused and distorted.

Certainly this is one of the evils which afflicts this generation—the security of not doing, the security of not being. It is the same type of evil that the Savior referred to when he pointed out the uselessness of the unprofitable servant (see Matthew 25:30), of the fig tree that didn't bear fruit (see Matthew 21:19–22), of the light that did not shine (see Luke 11:33–36), and of the salt that had lost its savor (see Luke 14:34–35).

Jesus Christ did not alter concepts in order to make incorrect actions compatible with a false sense of reality; he always clarified them in order to eliminate neutrality and ambiguity and to expose hypocrisy and deviant actions, thereby setting the standard by which the children of God will be judged.

He described things as they were and lived his life as a clear example to us all

of how to live and how to act, even saying, "For I have given you an example" (John 13:15).

### Mental scarecrows

Today there are many people, just as the farmer in our story, who, out of fear, create within themselves mental scarecrows and eventually end up believing that these scarecrows are real. In this manner they base their lives on false principles. It is unimportant to them that their ideas are not true; these ideas are the trenches they dig to defend themselves from fear, the commotion they make to drive away the truth. For example, the "scarecrow" of security is a confused and distorted imitation of true security. It provides these people with the illusion they need to weigh different situations and act as they want, using as their yardstick precepts totally apart from reality.

In the face of this distorted understanding of the truth, Latter-day Saints who have received the assignment through revelation to "take upon you the name of Christ, and speak the truth in soberness" (D&C 18:21) could appear to be proud and lacking humility to those who hold to incorrect concepts. This is because faithful members of the Church are filled with a deep assurance that comes from a firm testimony of the gospel, a sure knowledge of the divinity of the work in which we have embarked, received through revelation from the Holy Ghost.

This assurance and firm commitment "to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death" (Mosiah 18:9) could appear as boastful pride before those accustomed to using mental scarecrows.

But it is not that way. To confuse pride with safety, and vanity with testimony, shows lack of understanding by those who have not allowed the tempering of the Spirit to enter their hearts, who have not had the experience Nephi did when he said, "I did cry unto the Lord;

and behold he did visit me, and did soften my heart that I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father" (1 Nephi 2:16).

So in most cases the problem is not with the sower, but with the soil where the seed is planted, and very often those who are insecure challenge the self-confident person, not necessarily because of his self-confidence but because, by comparison, their own insecurity becomes evident.

### Joseph Smith's assurance

The important point is not to look for causes of insecurity, but rather to look for reasons why faithful members of the Church of Jesus Christ have such a deep assurance in their lives.

A powerful example of this is the Prophet Joseph Smith, who searched for an explanation for the persecution he endured, yet at the same time testified to the truthfulness of his vision:

"I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision; and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation.

"I had now got my mind satisfied so far as the sectarian world was concerned" (Joseph Smith—History 1:25–26).

What better way could he express the reality of his vision than to say, "I knew it, and I knew that God knew it"?

From this powerful and firm testimony, this knowledge from on high, came the assurance as portrayed by the

words of the Prophet. How could it be otherwise since Joseph Smith had the sure knowledge that he knew that God knew what he knew?

### Assurance that comes by knowing

Is this pride? Definitely not. This is assurance that comes from knowing. This is a sure knowledge which, through the Holy Ghost, "shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart" (D&C 8:2).

This is the assurance found in the lives of faithful Latter-day Saints, coming from a change brought about by the power of the Spirit, that prompts them to bear testimony of the divinity of the work. It is that same conversion, that same power, that same Spirit which Alma experienced when he called the people to repentance. In his search to remove scarecrows from the people he said, "Do ye not suppose that I know of these things myself? Behold, I testify unto you that I do know that these things whereof I have spoken are true. And how do ye suppose that I know of their surety?"

"Behold, I say unto you they are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit; and this is the spirit of revelation which is in me" (Alma 5:45–46).

The world may claim that this is pride, but members of the Lord's kingdom, those who do not live by borrowed light, those who have gained a testimony for themselves that this work is true, call it assurance.

It is the testimony, it is the true knowledge that "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7). This gives us the courage, the strength, and the commitment to testify of Christ and his gospel regardless of circumstances or external factors. But for the weak, the unsure, or those who question that the Latter-day Saints are Christians,



these circumstances and external factors prove to be more important than learning of Christ and gaining a testimony.

### Assurance comes from obeying God

The assurance seen in faithful members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the result of being "doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22); it is the result of striving to "live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God" (D&C 84:44) instead of talking of God yet not conforming actions to His word, as do those who are insecure. It is this assurance, the firm testimony of thousands of missionaries who are "occupied" with all their "heart, might, mind and strength" (D&C 4:2) in serving their fellowmen, as contrasted with millions who are "preoccupied" with worldly involvements and give only lip service.

It is important, then, in our determination to proclaim the gospel, in our desire to clarify the thinking of confused and insecure people, in our decision to be part of that great work of our Father in Heaven "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39), that we should remember, as King Benjamin admonished his people, to "always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness, . . . and humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily, and standing steadfastly in the faith" (Mosiah 4:11). "No one can assist in this work except he shall be humble" (D&C 12:8).

There is no guarantee of a great reward for anyone; there is no way that any of God's children can be assured of blessings from the Most High without worthy actions in their lives. The Lord's blessings are the fruits of obedience to the laws on which they are predicated.

Therefore, since we do have the truth, it is fundamental that we do not be boastful about it. Our pride, if it should exist at all, along with our eternal gratitude, should arise from how we make use of that truth and the manner in which we apply it in our lives.

We can pass through this mortal existence listening attentively and patiently to the best of instructions, or we can be spectators watching the expounding of great and profound principles without allowing these principles to crystallize within us by applying them in daily living.

### Seek and apply wisdom

We are saved only in direct proportion to the knowledge we gain, but the simple accumulation of facts will in no way save us if we do not possess wisdom.

Wisdom is not to be proclaimed or exhibited, but rather, it is to be sought, to be treasured; we need to pray for it and then express it by living a worthy life, according to the knowledge we have obtained. Change and the development of talents and hidden qualities in each of us are produced by putting into practice the knowledge we have obtained.

What is most important, then, is what we do with our lives. For faithful members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the truth is not an end in itself. Our lives are a constant quest and example of a dynamic relationship between truth and knowledge, between living and being.

As President Joseph F. Smith said, "Pure intelligence comprises not only knowledge, but also the power to properly apply that knowledge" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], p. 58).

In majestic clarity the Savior declared concerning this subject, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me."

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:16-17).

It is from this principle that Latter-day Saints receive the strength of their testimonies, the assurance of their convictions, as they practice what they preach in their daily lives.

To all those faithful Latter-day Saints who share their testimonies concerning the truthfulness of this work in

the four corners of the earth, I wish to add mine, with the assurance that I know that God knows I know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has the power to administer the saving ordinances that crown the efforts of all those who, through an obedient and faithful life, come unto Christ. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The choir sang "Love at Home" without announcement.

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### President Hinckley

Elder Angel Abrea of the First Quorum of the Seventy addressed us, and the Ricks College Centennial Choir sang "Love at Home."

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "How Firm a Foundation," following which we shall be pleased to hear from Elders Douglas H. Smith and Glen L. Rudd, who were sustained at the last April conference as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

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The choir and congregation sang "How Firm a Foundation."

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## Elder Douglas H. Smith

My beloved brothers and sisters, I rejoice in the privilege of being with you this afternoon in another general conference session. We have unitedly come here to worship the Lord and to receive instruction and counsel from our leaders. We have much for which to be thankful, and my heart is filled with appreciation and gratitude for the rich blessings from the Lord which are mine in serving with the wonderful missionaries and members of the Church in Asia. His work is growing and prospering there as well as throughout the world.

### What think ye of Christ?

As Jesus approached that fateful hour when he would give himself as the supreme sacrifice for all mankind, he asked those who challenged him, "What think ye of Christ?" (Matthew 22:42). I have pondered many times that searching inquiry as it applies to my life and to all of us in this time of history. I wonder, as the register of our lives is indelibly written, and from which we will be judged, what that heavenly record will say of us in this generation of time. Do we fully accept him as the only begotten Son of God sent to earth to redeem the world?

King Benjamin, as Nephi recorded, so testified. We read from Helaman:

"O remember, remember, my sons, the words which king Benjamin spake unto his people; yea, remember that there is no other way nor means whereby man can be saved, only through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, who shall come; yea, remember that he cometh to redeem the world" (Helaman 5:9).

### Jesus' teachings and sacrifice

The Lamb of God came to earth to redeem and to teach. He taught the blessed law of love:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . .

" . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37, 39).

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34).

The Holy One of Israel sought no earthly personal gain or glory. He strove only to serve his Father and to show forth eternal love to the children of God on earth.

The Messiah caused the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the diseased to be healed, the hungry to be fed. Every act of his life was one of deep inner love, compassion, kindness, and forgiveness. The poor and downtrodden continuously had his benevolence, and, as he came to the end of his mortal life, his heart was full of sympathy for those who had caused his crucifixion. He prayed to the Father, "Forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

As the dark and dreadful days in the world's history came to pass, Jesus was betrayed, apprehended, bound, and led away captive to answer the trumped-up charges against him. They taunted him with false witnesses who came forth to challenge him. They smote him, ridiculed him, tormented him. Finally, blindfolded and scourged, he was mocked in brutish manner.

His adversaries sought to take his life. No other judgmental decree would satisfy them. They accepted full responsibility for his blood on them and their children. They led him bound before Pilate, who found in him no fault at all. Then he was taken before Herod, who likewise found nothing of which to condemn him. With envy and malice, they once again brought him before Pilate. For the third time, Pilate found no justifiable reason to declare him guilty. He offered a substitute and to set Jesus free. The hideous cries from those who feared the Son of God called forth to crucify him.

The sacrifice of the Lamb of God, so prophesied by the prophets for centuries, had come. Quietly, and without further

utterance in his own defense, he gave his life as a ransom for us, that through him and by him we might have blessed immortality—to be resurrected, body and spirit united forever. He further provided the way that through obedience to his commandments and reception of the sacred ordinances, we might have eternal life. His life was evidence of his consciousness for all of his father's children.

### Testimony and admonition

Again, I ask the question, "What think ye of Christ?" I bear you my solemn testimony and stand by the side of the disciple Peter who, when asked the direct and pointed question, "But whom say ye that I am?" answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:15–16; italics added). I witness it unto you, that he is the divine Savior of the world, the promised Messiah. I reiterate the bold utterance of the disciple, "Thou art [truly] the Christ, the Son of . . . God"; and I beckon to all to come unto Christ and receive the blessings of heaven which await those who will keep his commandments and endure to the end.

I certify to you that we are led by living prophets today who receive inspiration and revelation from the Lord. I further clasp hands with Joshua, who said, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, amen.

## Elder Glen L. Rudd

### Importance of service

When I was a young man in the Aaronic Priesthood, we boys used to stand in our quorum meetings and repeat in unison, "Priesthood means service. Bearing the priesthood, I will serve." This was our weekly pledge. It was part of every quorum meeting. Most of us began to understand that honoring the

priesthood required our being active and serving in the Church.

In those days we played a lot of tennis. We knew that in tennis, if we didn't serve well, we usually didn't win. Our priesthood leaders taught us the same concept insofar as the Church was concerned. They helped us learn to serve at the proper time and in the proper way.

No boy or man fully possesses the priesthood until he learns to serve others and the Lord. It is true that someone with authority may bestow the priesthood by the laying on of hands, but until we do something by way of service to others, the priesthood lies dormant within us and is of little value. We must not fail to magnify the callings we receive.

### **Keep simple doctrines simple**

During the past few months, I have felt that I might best serve by encouraging and helping all members to feel the necessity of keeping the simple doctrines of the gospel simple. I strongly feel that the gospel was given to us in a simple, plain, and clear manner. My mission president taught us that the gospel of Jesus Christ is beautifully simple and simply beautiful. The tendency of many is to complicate these lovely, simple requirements that the Lord has given to us.

### **Power in simple prayer**

Nothing is more simple than prayer. The Savior, while upon the earth, gave the example and commanded all to follow in His footsteps. If we have faith that our Heavenly Father lives and that we can commune with Him in a very direct way, then prayer becomes one of the most beautiful, lovely, simple acts that we can do.

I have a strong testimony that the Lord does hear and answer prayers. We are obligated to thank Him. We are obligated to converse with Him in such a way that there are no obstacles between us and our Father in Heaven. From the very beginning the Lord has instructed His earthly children to remember Him in prayer.

### **Prayers of a Primary boy**

One morning a good many years ago, a member of the Council of the Twelve came to my office and told me of a beautiful, touching experience that had happened to him that day. He had gone to the old Deseret Gym to enjoy the steam

bath for a while. As he sat there in the heavy steam, he heard the door open and looked upward toward the door to see who was entering. He could not see anyone, but he had a feeling someone else was there in the room with him. After a few minutes, he saw a young Primary-age boy about eight or nine years old who had seated himself two or three feet away. The boy gradually slid closer to the Apostle, and they finally said "hello" to each other. Then the boy moved even closer until he could look up into the face of the Church leader. The little boy said, "Mister, I think I know who you are." The Apostle said, "Who am I?" The boy said, "I think you are one of the Apostles of the Church. I think you are the one who travels all over the ocean on big boats and little boats and all kinds of airplanes—and you are the one who never gets sick or hurt in any wrecks." The Apostle acknowledged that he was the one who was having those great experiences. The boy then said to him, "Do you know why it is you don't ever get killed or get hurt?" The Apostle said, "No, why is that?" The little Primary boy said, "*That's because I pray for you.*"

What a touching, lovely expression of faith in a simple, wonderful way! This experience happened forty years ago, but I think of it frequently. There is far more power in simple prayer than many of us think possible.

### **The Lord hears our prayers**

My brothers and sisters, thousands and even hundreds of thousands of people pray for their loved ones each and every day. Great numbers pray for the leaders of the Church, particularly for our prophet, President Benson. I am convinced that the Lord hears the simple prayers of all people. I am sure He hears the prayer of the aged widow as well as the little child who prays with simple, plain, and understandable faith. I am also certain that a loving Heavenly Father appreciates the sincere, regular prayers of the faithful much more than the hurried, urgent appeals given only in times of crisis.

## The blessing of prayer

May the Lord bless and help us all to have the courage to pray with our families. Nothing is more wonderful than for parents to gather their children around them and enjoy the special, tender moments of communing with our Heavenly Father in family prayer. Nothing binds a family together more; and nothing puts us in a position to receive His blessings more than compliance with that wonderful commandment and privilege. Even for those of us who no longer have children at home, the blessing of praying together as companions is wonderful. The faithful person living alone is also lifted up and richly rewarded through humble, secret prayer.

Jesus said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

May the Lord bless us and help us all to serve Him with simple, childlike faith, simple forgiveness and repentance, and especially with simple prayer, that we may enjoy the strength, power, and beauty that come from the plain and simple things of the gospel, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## President Hinckley

Elders Douglas H. Smith and Glen L. Rudd have just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

## Elder Dallin H. Oaks

### Always remember Him

In April 1830 the Lord commanded the members of his newly restored church to "meet together often to partake of bread and wine in the remembrance of the Lord Jesus" (D&C 20:75). This was the same instruction he gave when he introduced this ordinance nearly two thousand years ago. Luke writes:

"And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19).

When we partake of the sacrament, we witness unto God the Eternal Father that we "do always remember" his Son (D&C 20:77, 79; 3 Nephi 18:7, 11). Each Sabbath day millions of Latter-day Saints make this promise. What does it mean to "always remember" our Savior?

To remember means to keep in memory. In the scriptures, it often means to keep a person in memory, together with associated emotions like love, loyalty, or gratitude. The stronger the

emotion, the more vivid and influential the memory. Here are some examples:

1. Most of us have the clearest memories of our mortal parents, who gave us birth and nurtured us through childhood. This kind of memory does not dim with the passing years, but with wisdom and perspective becomes ever more meaningful. As I grow older, I think more frequently of my father and my mother. I will always remember them.

2. Shortly before my wife was to give birth to our first child, we learned that the baby must be born by cesarean section. I was then a student at Brigham Young University, going to school full time and working almost full time. From my meager earnings, a little over \$1.00 an hour, we had saved enough money for the hospital and doctor bills, but nothing in our plans or emotions had prepared us for this shocking announcement. We scarcely knew what a cesarean birth was, and we feared the worst.

A few days later we faced our ordeal. After what seemed an eternity, I stood at a window in the hospital hallway, looking into a basket containing our

firstborn. The joy of seeing her and knowing that my beloved companion had survived the operation was inexpressible. As I experienced that moment, I became aware of a stranger standing beside me. He introduced himself as Dr. N. Frederick Hicken, the surgeon who had come from Salt Lake City to perform the operation. His presence reminded me that a surgeon's fee had not been in our plans, and I began to ask him if I could pay his fee over a period of time. "Don't worry about that, young man," he said in a kindly way. "This is one from the Hickens to the Oakses." Before I could stammer a thank-you, he was gone.

I was filled with wonder at this unexpected gift. Our benefactor must have known my father, a young medical doctor who died when I was a boy. He must have given us this gift because of something my father had done. I marveled at the goodness of this man who had come to us in our crisis and had, without recompense, used his powers to preserve the lives of those I loved. The emotion of that moment made the memory indelible. The name of that doctor is precious to me. I will always remember him.

3. Some time ago, someone praised me for something I had done. Even as I received that compliment I knew I did not deserve it. The credit belonged to wise and wonderful teachers who had taught me what to do and how to do it. My teachers were memorable. I shudder to think what I would have lost if teachers had not helped me want to learn and then taught me what I needed to know. I will always be grateful to my teachers. I will always remember them.

By now you must surely realize that I have given these three examples because the reasons why I will always remember these persons are related to the reasons why we should always remember Jesus Christ: He is our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Teacher.

### **Our Creator, our Redeemer, our Teacher**

Under the direction and according to the plan of God the Father, his Son

Jehovah "created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are" (3 Nephi 9:15). He gave us life in the beginning of this world, and through the power of his resurrection he will give each of us life again after we have died in mortality. Jesus Christ is the life of the world.

He is our Redeemer. According to the Father's plan, he provided the atoning sacrifice that can rescue us from the extremity of spiritual death. As a free-will offering, the Only Begotten Son of God came to earth and shed his blood for the remission of our sins (see D&C 27:2).

Our Creator and our Redeemer is also our Teacher. He taught us how to live. He gave us commandments, and if we follow them, we will receive blessings and happiness in this world and eternal life in the world to come.

And so we see that He whom we should always remember is He who gave us mortal life, He who showed us the way to a happy life, and He who redeems us so we can have immortality and eternal life.

If we keep our covenant that we will always remember him, we can always have his Spirit to be with us (see D&C 20:77, 79). That Spirit will testify of him, and it will guide us into truth.

His teachings and his example will guide and strengthen us in the way we should live. The effect was described in the words of the once popular song, "Try to remember, and if you remember, then follow" ("Try to Remember," words by Tom Jones).

I will now refer to some of these teachings we should remember and follow.

### **Serve as called**

*Follow* is the word the Savior used when he called his helpers to the ministry. As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two fishermen, Simon Peter and his brother Andrew, at work in their vocation. "And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). "And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him" (Mark 1:18).

Here the Savior established a pattern for those he calls to do his work. Acting through his servants, for he has said that "by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same" (D&C 1:38), he calls us to take time from our daily activities to follow him and serve our fellowmen. Even the greatest among us should be the servant of all (see Mark 10:43-44). Those who always remember him will straightway assume and faithfully fulfill the responsibilities to which they are called by his servants.

### **Forgive others**

Among the things we should remember about the Savior is that there are things we should forget about our fellowmen—the wrongs they have done us. "Lord," the Apostle Peter asked the Master, "how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" (Matthew 18:21). In response, Jesus taught the parable of the unforgiving servant. This man owed a large debt to his king. When he begged for mercy, the king was moved with compassion and forgave the debt. But when a fellow servant owed him a debt, this man took his debtor by the throat and cast him into prison until he should pay it. When the unforgiving servant was brought to judgment, the king said:

"Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?"

"And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

"So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you," Jesus concluded (Matthew 18:33-35; see also Matthew 6:14-15, 3 Nephi 13:14-15).

As the Lord has told us in modern revelation, "He that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin" (D&C 64:9). If we always remember our Savior, we will forgive and forget grievances against those who have wronged us.

### **Receive ordinances**

At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus sought out John the Baptist, who was preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (see Mark 1:4).

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

"But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?"

"And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:13-15).

Those who seek to follow the Savior will understand the importance of the ordinance of baptism. The Lamb without Blemish saw fit to submit himself to baptism by one holding the authority of the priesthood in order to "fulfill all righteousness." How much more each of us has need of the cleansing and saving power of this ordinance and the other ordinances of the gospel.

As we always remember him, we should strive to assure that we and our family members and, indeed, all the sons and daughters of God everywhere follow our Savior into the waters of baptism. This reminds each of us of our duties to proclaim the gospel, perfect the Saints, and redeem the dead.

### **Endure afflictions**

Remembering the Savior can also help us understand and endure the inevitable afflictions of this life. The Savior taught:

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matthew 5:11-12).

### **Minister to the sick and the afflicted**

When the Risen Lord appeared to the people on this continent, he taught them

and called leaders and gave them the authority of his priesthood. Next he healed the sick, the lame, the blind, and all others who were afflicted in any manner. Then "he commanded that their little children should be brought" (3 Nephi 17:11). And he "blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them" (v. 21).

As I remember this inspiring example, I also remember visits and letters I have had from persons caring for loved ones who are sick or who are afflicted with the infirmities of old age. I also remember loved ones grieving over little children with life-shortening or crippling physical or emotional disabilities. How their hearts ache for their little ones! How they need our love and support! I also remember the words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40). Here our Savior gives an assurance of blessings for those who carry such burdens and a challenge for others who can lend them support.

### Love neighbors

We should always remember how the Savior taught us to love and do good to one another. Loving and serving one another can solve so many problems!

I recently received a letter from a sister in another country. She wrote about the plight of single adult members of the Church. "Where do I fit in?" she asked. She longed to join in church social activities, but she said they were always designed for couples. She felt herself the "odd one out," forced by circumstances rather than choice to forgo these wholesome associations "rather than risk breaking up even numbers."

She wrote of the trauma of being single, especially when this resulted from a companion's desertion, divorce, or death. When she was a married woman, she said, "I never once gave much thought to the plight of the single sisters, except experiencing a kind of helpless pity for them." Now in that circumstance herself, she felt that the married sisters of her acquaintance tended to shun the sisters who were single. She asked me

what could be done to help the single adult members of the Church with what she described as their "feelings of rejection, nonacceptance, and noncaring by their fellow Church members." Judging from the letters we receive, I believe there are many thousands of single adult members, our brothers and sisters, with similar feelings.

Our Savior gave us the parable of the good shepherd who left the multitude and went out in search of a single sheep who was lost (see Luke 15:3-6). Doesn't that same principle require couples who enjoy loving companionship to go out of their way to include in their social circles brothers and sisters who have been deprived of that companionship? "Try to remember, and if you remember, then follow."

A few years ago I spoke by assignment to a chamber of commerce group in Salt Lake City. During a question-answer period, I listened to a fine woman who was not of our faith. She spoke movingly of the pain her children had experienced when they were shunned by LDS youth in school and social activities. More recently, a Utah convert to the Church has written of his concern at the way some non-LDS adults with good basic values come to Utah with high expectations for a life among good neighbors and then, as he wrote, "find themselves excluded at best and ostracized at worst."

Of course, there will be differences in the personal standards and social activities of faithful Latter-day Saints and members of other groups. But these differences are no excuse for ostracism, arrogance, or unkindness by LDS people. As my convert friend wrote, "I personally believe that Satan is as active among the Saints in turning them away from their neighbors as he is in turning disaffected persons against the Church."

As we covenant that we will always remember our Savior, we must not forget Jehovah's command to Israel:

"But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself" (Leviticus 19:34; see also Exodus 22:21, Deuteronomy 10:19).



We should always remember how Jesus commanded us to love our neighbor as ourselves. He illustrated that great teaching with the example of the Good Samaritan, who crossed the social barriers of his day to perform acts of kindness and mercy. Then the Savior said, "Go, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:37).

A decade ago President Spencer W. Kimball said, "Let us fellowship the students from all nations as they come to our land, so that we, above all other people, treat them as brothers and sisters in true friendship, whether or not they are interested in the gospel" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 29 Sept. 1978).

That prophetic instruction should guide our relationships with all of our neighbors.

### **Much given, much required**

As we remember our Lord and Savior, we should contemplate the great blessings we have as members of The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We have been taught by the Lord Jesus Christ. We have been led by his prophets. We have received the sealing ordinances of his gospel. He has blessed us bounteously.

As we remember all of this, we should also remember the divine caution: "For of him unto whom much is given much is required" (D&C 82:3; see also Luke 12:48). That eternal principle of law and justice is a measure of what God expects of us.

May we always remember, as we covenant to do, is my humble prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Hinckley**

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us, and Elder Russell M. Nelson of this same council will be our concluding speaker.

## **Elder Russell M. Nelson**

I echo the testimony of our beloved associate, Elder Dallin H. Oaks. With him and the other Brethren, I applaud the efforts of Latter-day Saints throughout the world who willingly serve in building the kingdom of God. Likewise, I respect those who quietly do their duty though deepening trials come their way. And I admire those who strive to be more worthy by overcoming a personal fault or who work to achieve a difficult goal.

### **"Impossible" challenges**

I feel impressed to counsel those engaged in personal challenges to do right. In particular, my heart reaches out to those who feel discouraged by the magnitude of their struggle. Many shoulder heavy burdens of righteous responsibility which, on occasion, seem so difficult to bear. I have heard those challenges termed *impossible*.

As a medical doctor, I have known the face of adversity. I have seen much of death and dying, suffering and sorrow. I also remember the plight of students overwhelmed by their studies and of those striving to learn a foreign language. And I recall the fatigue and frustration felt by young parents with children in need. Amidst circumstances seemingly impossible, I have also experienced the joyous relief that comes when one's understanding is deepened by scriptural insight.

### **To teach His people, the Lord employs the unlikely**

The Lord has often chosen to instruct His people in their times of trial. Scriptures show that some of His lasting lessons have been taught with examples terrible as war, commonplace as child-bearing, or obvious as hazards of deep water. His teachings are frequently based

on common understanding, but with uncommon results. Indeed, one might say that to teach His people, the Lord employs the unlikely.

Warfare, for example, has been known since time began. Even in that ugly circumstance, the Lord has helped those obedient to His counsel. Going into battle, all would assume the obvious advantage of outnumbering an enemy. But when God's disciple Gideon was leading an army against the Midianites, "the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many, . . . lest Israel vaunt themselves, . . . saying, Mine own hand hath saved me" (Judges 7:2).

So the Lord directed Gideon to reduce his numbers. He first decreased the troops from twenty-two thousand to ten thousand.

Then the Lord said to Gideon, "The people are yet too many" (Judges 7:4). So another reduction was made. Finally, only three hundred remained. Then the Lord delivered the victory to the outnumbered few (see Judges 7:5-25).

Even more widely known than war is an understanding of childbearing. Everyone "knows" that *old* women do not bear children. So upon whom did the Lord call to bear Abraham's birthright son? Sarah, at age ninety! When told this was to be, she asked a logical question: "Shall I [which am old] of a surety bear a child?" (Genesis 18:13). From heaven came this reply: "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:14).

So decreed, she gave birth to Isaac, to carry the crucial Abrahamic covenant into the second generation (see Genesis 26:1-4, 24).

Later, for one of the most important events ever to occur, the other extreme was chosen. As all knew that an elderly woman could not bear children, it was just as obvious that a virgin could not have children. But Isaiah had made this prophetic utterance:

"The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

When Mary was notified of her sacred responsibility, the announcing

angel reassured, "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

The expression *deep water* means danger! That very hazard challenged the Israelites led by Moses at the Red Sea (see Exodus 14). Later, they were led by Joshua to the river Jordan at flood time (see Joshua 3). In each instance, deep water was divinely divided to allow the faithful to reach their destination safely. To teach His people, the Lord employs the unlikely.

### Challenges of the Restoration

Turning to our day, have you ever wondered why the Master waited so long to inaugurate the promised "restitution of all things" (Acts 3:21)? Any competitor knows the disadvantage of allowing an opponent to get too far ahead. Wouldn't the work of the restoration of the Church have been easier if begun earlier?

Suppose for a moment you are a member of a team. The coach beckons you from the bench and says: "You are to enter this contest. I not only want you to win; you shall win. But the going will be tough. The score at this moment is 1,143,000,000 to six, and you are to play on the team with the six points!"

That large number was the approximate population of the earth in the year 1830 when the restored church of Jesus Christ was officially organized with six members (see James Avery Joyce, sel., *World Population Basic Documents*, 4 vols. [Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1976], 4:2214). The setting was remote and rural. By standards of the world, its leaders were deemed to be unlearned. Their followers seemed so ordinary. But with them, the work was begun. Assignments had been revealed:

- The gospel was to be preached to every kindred, nation, tongue, and people.
- Ordinary folk were to become Saints.
- Redemptive work was to be done for all who had ever lived.

The great dispensation of the latter days had commenced, and they were the ones to usher it forth!

Furthermore, the Prophet Joseph Smith was unjustly held in the unspeakable isolation of a distant prison. In such obscurity, then and there, he was told by the Lord that “the ends of the earth shall inquire after thy name” (D&C 122:1).

If any tasks ever deserved the label *impossible*, those would seem to qualify. But, in fact, our Lord had spoken: “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26; see also Mark 10:27, Luke 18:27). To teach His people, the Lord employs the unlikely.

A century and a half later, the burdening baton of that opportunity has now been passed to us. We are children of the noble birthright, who must carry on in spite of our foredetermined status to be broadly outnumbered and widely opposed. Challenges lie ahead for the Church and for each member divinely charged toward self-improvement and service.

How is it possible to achieve the “impossible”? Learn and obey the teachings of God. From the holy scriptures, heaven-sent lift will be found for heaven-sent duties. To so achieve, at least three basic scriptural themes loom repeatedly as requirements.

### **Faith helps us achieve the “impossible”**

The foremost requisite is *faith*. It is the first principle of the gospel (see Articles of Faith 1:4). In his epistle to the Hebrews, Paul so taught. He concluded that by faith the great deeds of Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, and others were accomplished (see Hebrews 11:4–34).

Prophets on the American hemisphere similarly taught the fundamental importance of faith. Moroni said it included things “hoped for and not seen” and then warned his skeptics, “Dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith” (Ether 12:6). Then he spoke of leaders whose faith preceded their miraculous deeds, including Alma, Amulek, Nephi, Lehi, Ammon, the brother of

Jared, and the three who were promised that they should not taste of death (see Ether 12:13–20).

The Lord personally taught this truth to his disciples: “If ye have faith,” He said, “nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Matthew 17:20).

Faith is nurtured through knowledge of God. It comes from prayer and feasting upon the words of Christ through diligent study of the scriptures.

### **Focus helps us achieve the “impossible”**

The second requisite I have classified as *focus*. Imagine, if you will, a pair of powerful binoculars. Two separate optical systems are joined together with a gear to focus two independent images into one three-dimensional view. To apply this analogy, let the scene on the left side of your binoculars represent *your perception* of your task. Let the picture on the right side represent the *Lord's perspective* of your task—the portion of His plan He has entrusted to you. Now, connect your system to His. By mental adjustment, fuse your focus. Something wonderful happens. Your vision and His are now the same. You have developed an “eye single to the glory of God” (D&C 4:5; see also Mormon 8:15). With that perspective, look upward—above and beyond mundane things about you. The Lord said, “Look unto me in every thought” (D&C 6:36). That special vision will also help clarify your wishes when they may be a bit fuzzy and out of focus with God's hopes for your divine destiny. Indeed, the precise challenge you regard now as “impossible” may be the very refinement you need, in His eye.

Recently I visited the home of a man terminally ill. The stake president introduced me to the man's family. His wife demonstrated such focus when she asked for a blessing for her dying husband—not for healing, but for peace, not for a miracle, but for ability to abide to the end. She could see from an eternal viewpoint, not merely from the perspective of one weighted with the responsibilities of her husband's day-to-day care.

Elsewhere, a mother with focus nurtures her son, crippled for the whole of this life. Daily she thanks her Heavenly Father for the privilege of laboring in love with a child for whom mortality's vale of tears will be mercifully brief. Her focus is fixed on eternity. With celestial sight, trials impossible to change become possible to endure.

### **Strength and courage help us achieve the "impossible"**

A third theme in the scriptures requisite for significant accomplishment is difficult to summarize in one word, so I shall link two to describe it—*strength* and *courage*. Repeatedly, scriptures yoke these attributes of character together, especially when difficult challenges are to be conquered (see Deuteronomy 31:6, 7, 23; Joshua 1:6, 7, 9, 18; 10:25; 1 Chronicles 22:13, 28:20; 2 Chronicles 32:7; Psalms 27:14, 31:24; Alma 43:43, 53:20).

Perhaps this is more easily illustrated than defined. Our pioneer forefathers are good examples. They sang, "Gird up your loins; fresh courage take" ("Come, Come, Ye Saints," *Hymns* [1985], no. 30). They feared no toil and no labor. Among them were Johan Andreas Jensen and his wife, Petra, who left their native Norway in 1863. Their family included six-week-old tiny twin daughters. As handcars were pulled in their rugged journey, one of those little girls died along the way. The child who survived grew up to become my Grandmother Nelson!

There are pioneers in the Church today just as strong and courageous. Recently, I interviewed a married couple three days after their release as full-time missionaries in a large metropolis. "We are converts," they said. "We joined the Church ten years ago. Even though we just completed a mission, we want to go again! But this time, we would like to volunteer for a more difficult assignment. We want to teach and serve children of God who live in remote areas of the world!"

As I countered with the grim realities of their request, they continued their expression of commitment. "Our three children and their spouses will assist with our expenses. Two of those couples have joined the Church already, and the third is equally supportive. Please send us among humble people who love the Lord and desire to know that His church has again been restored to the earth." Needless to say, their petition was gratefully heard, and now they have received their second call to missionary service.

Strength and courage also characterize another couple. As faithful members of the Church, they had always upheld its doctrines, including the twelfth article of faith. When their country went to war, military conscription called the dutiful husband away from his wife before either had learned she was to bear their child. He was captured by enemy troops and taken as a prisoner of war. Months elapsed. Their baby came. Still no word to know whether the new father was alive. A year after his capture, he was permitted to write to his wife.

Meanwhile, though countries apart, they each remained faithful to covenants made at baptism. Even though clothed in prisoner's stripes and able to speak the language of his captors' country only in a limited way, he became Sunday School superintendent of the branch. He baptized four fellow prisoners during their confinement. Three years after the war ended, he returned home to his wife and a son he had never seen. Later, he served for ten years as the first stake president of his country. Now he is a member of the presidency of one of our temples! His wife stands faithfully beside him in the privilege of that sacred assignment.

### **With God all things are possible**

You who may be momentarily disheartened, remember, life is not meant to be easy. Trials must be borne and grief endured along the way. As you remember that "with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37), know that He is your Father. You are a son or daughter created

in His image, entitled through your worthiness to receive revelation to help with your righteous endeavors. You may take upon you the holy name of the Lord. You can qualify to speak in the sacred name of God (see D&C 1:20). It matters not that giants of tribulation torment you. Your prayerful access to help is just as real as when David battled his Goliath (see 1 Samuel 17).

Foster your faith. Fuse your focus with an eye single to the glory of God. "Be strong and courageous" (2 Chronicles 32:7), and you will be given power and protection from on high. "For I will go before your face," the Lord declared. "I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up" (D&C 84:88).

The great latter-day work of which we are a part shall be accomplished. Prophecies of the ages shall be fulfilled. "For with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27), I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Hinckley**

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M.

The nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

We call your attention to the fact that tomorrow morning at 2:00 A.M. we change from mountain standard time to mountain daylight saving time. Please move your clocks ahead one hour before you retire so that you will be here on time tomorrow.

We express gratitude to the Ricks College Centennial Choir for the beautiful music which we have heard this afternoon.

The choir will now sing in closing, "Where Can I Turn for Peace?" Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder H. Verlan Andersen of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

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The choir sang "Where Can I Turn for Peace?"

Elder H. Verlan Andersen offered the benediction.

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## **GENERAL PRIESTHOOD SESSION**

The general priesthood session, the third session of the 158th Annual General Conference, convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 2, 1988. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a men's choir from the Ogden and Mount Ogden regions. The choir was directed by Jerry F. Simon, and Clay Christiansen was at the organ.

President Monson opened the meeting with the following remarks:

### **President Thomas S. Monson**

Brethren, good evening. President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked that I conduct this general priesthood session. We extend our love and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit and satellite transmission to holders of the priesthood gathered in the

Assembly Hall, the BYU Marriott Center, and locations in many countries around the world. We note that Elders Derek A. Cuthbert and Devere Harris are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders Robert E. Wells and Jack H. Goaslind are seated on the stand in the BYU Marriott Center.

For the information of the brethren in outlying areas, we announce that at the session this afternoon, Robert Edward Sackley and Larry Lionel Kendrick were sustained as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and that Sister Michaelene P. Grassli was sustained as president of the General Primary, with Betty Jo Nelson Jepsen as her first counselor and Ruth Broadbent Wright as her second counselor. Sister Dwan J. Young was released as general Primary president to accompany her husband, who has been called to serve as president of the Canada Calgary Mission.

All of you are special guests tonight, but we are pleased to have in attendance in the Tabernacle Brother Michael Smith, a member of the All-American Academic basketball team, and Brother Brian Taylor, who was a teammate of his on the BYU WAC championship team.

The singing during this session will be furnished by a men's choir from the Ogden and Mount Ogden regions under the direction of Brother Jerry F. Simon with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ.

We shall begin by the choir singing "The Iron Rod." Following the singing, Elder Hugh W. Pinnock, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

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The choir sang "The Iron Rod."  
Elder Hugh W. Pinnock offered the invocation.

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### President Monson

The choir will now favor us with that beautiful number, the favorite of President Benson's, "How Great Thou Art." Following the choir number, Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will speak to us.

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The choir sang "How Great Thou Art."

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## Elder James E. Faust

### Responsibility to the sisters

It is an awesome and humbling responsibility to address the priesthood of the Church. I feel impressed, brethren, to speak to the men and the boys who hold the priesthood of Almighty God concerning our responsibility to the faithful sisters of the Church. You might wonder why I would want to address this subject. I wonder myself, but I am prompted to, and feel there is a need. I believe that we as members of the Church, and as the holders of the priesthood, will never achieve our potential without having in our lives the blessings of the unique quali-

ties of our mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, and all of the good women of the Church.

Perhaps you have all heard the story, and it is just a story, of the insensitive man who held two season tickets to the basketball games at the local university. His wife died, and a day or two later he went to the game. The seat previously occupied by his wife was empty. Someone said, "Those seats of yours must be very expensive. Couldn't you find a member of the family to come and sit in your wife's seat?" The man answered, "No, they couldn't come. They've all gone to her funeral."

I fear that we brethren often get far too engrossed in the apparent importance of our own activities and relegate the less visible contributions of the sisters to a lesser role. They serve very quietly and effectively, often unnoticed, unrecognized, and unappreciated.

### **Husbands, love your wives**

The priesthood places upon the fathers the responsibility of being the head of the family and the home. What does being the head of the family mean? It is a priesthood power, and the Doctrine and Covenants, section 121, makes it clear that all priesthood responsibilities must be exercised "only by persuasion, . . . by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned" (D&C 121:41). Holding the priesthood does not mean that a man is a power-broker, or that he sits on a throne, dictating in macho terms, or that he is superior in any way. Rather, he is a leader by authority of example. Paul's counsel to the Ephesians included, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25). As Christ lifts us all, so must we, rather than put down women or anyone.

Nowhere does the doctrine of this church declare that men are superior to women. Paul said to the Corinthians, "Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:11). Each brings his or her own separate and unique strengths to the family and the Church. Women are not just cooks, stewards of our homes, or servants. They are much more. They are the enrichment of humanity.

### **Young men, learn to appreciate women**

It is most important that you Aaronic Priesthood holders learn what strengths you have as men. Possibly you were foreordained to great priesthood callings. You need to learn that these masculine strengths are great, noble, and God-given; however, they also have some

limitations. Because of these limitations, it is equally important to learn how the influence of good women in our lives can complement these strengths and overcome these limitations. As you walk on the way to eternity, it is important to gain some understanding and appreciation for the wonderful endowments and callings God has given uniquely to women.

### **The highest place of honor**

I wonder if we really understand the fulness of these queenly endowments. If we could recognize the true greatness of these women, we would not treat them as we sometimes do. The world often uses and abuses women. We holders of the priesthood should honor good women in and out of the Church as true sisters, not as objects and sources of service or pleasure. Our consideration for women should spring from esteem for the daughters of Zion and an awareness of their true identity more than from a concern with their functions and roles.

President Ezra Taft Benson has stated, "Man is at his best when complemented by a good woman's natural influence" (in *Woman* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979], p. 69).

In 1935 the First Presidency stated, "The true spirit of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints gives to woman the highest place of honor in human life" (James R. Clark, comp., *Messengers of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75], 6:5). This has been confirmed by President Heber J. Grant: "Without the wonderful work of the women I realize that the Church would have been a failure" (*Gospel Standards*, comp. G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1941], p. 150).

### **Influence of good women**

You young men who hold the Aaronic Priesthood need to know that you cannot achieve your potential without the influence of good women, particularly your mother and, in a few years, a good

wife. But it is too soon for you deacons and teachers to think seriously about dating. Dating, along with temple marriage, will come at the appropriate season in your life. You have to be elders to go to the temple.

In preparation for that surpassing experience, it is important for you to learn now to appreciate the special gifts of the good sisters of the Church, whom God has so abundantly endowed with talents. Your eternal helpmate will gently hold you to your potential. She will give loving and thoughtful encouragement, as well as comfort and discipline. She will also lift you up when you are down and bring you back to earth when you are puffed up. She will bless your life in countless ways. As President Kimball said, "Brethren, we cannot be exalted without our wives. There can be no heaven without righteous women" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, p. 7; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, p. 5).

### Creation's masterpiece

In recent years a debate has raged about the equality of the sexes. Women are not in any sense lesser creations than men. In fact, they lose something when they are compared to men. President David O. McKay stated, "A beautiful, modest, gracious woman is creation's masterpiece" (*Gospel Ideals* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953], p. 449). Daniel Defoe, the great English writer, stated, "A woman of sense and manners is the finest and most delicate part of God's creation, the glory of her Maker. . . . He gave the best gift either God could bestow or man receive" ("The Education of Women," in *England in Literature*, ed. Robert C. Pooley [Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1963], pp. 261-62).

Surely the secret citadel of women's inner strength is their spirituality. In this they equal and even surpass men, as they do in faith, morality, and commitment when truly converted to the gospel. They have "more trust in the Lord [and] more hope in his word" ("More Holiness Give Me," *Hymns* [1985], no. 131). This inner

spiritual sense seems to give them a certain resilience to cope with sorrow, trouble, and uncertainty.

### Respect women

Any form of physical or mental abuse to any woman is not worthy of any priesthood holder. President Gordon B. Hinckley has stated, "I feel likewise that it ill becomes any man who holds the priesthood of God to abuse his wife in any way, to demean or injure or take undue advantage of the woman who is the mother of his children, the companion of his life, and his companion for eternity if he has received that greater blessing" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1982, p. 112; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, p. 77). This, of course, means verbal as well as physical abuse.

A husband should always try to treat his wife with the greatest courtesy and respect, holding her in the highest esteem. He should speak to her in a kind and a soft manner, showing his love by word and deed. As she feels this love and tenderness she will mirror it and return it tenfold.

I believe that of the two parties in a male-female relationship, the bearer of the priesthood has the greater duty to see that the commandments of God, the standards of the Church, and parental authority are honored. Likewise, when male and female violate these commandments, I believe the priesthood holder is generally more blameworthy because he has been entrusted with the great, righteous power to act in the name of God. One who violates this trust demeans both this ultimate power and himself and seriously injures the woman who has his confidence.

### Responsibilities while dating

When you boys become priests and elders and begin to date, you need to know that the best place to date is at church and church-related activities. As you date, you will be entrusted by a girl's parents with their most cherished blessing. You will have the responsibility to protect not only her well-being, but also



her honor, even above your own safety. One of the duties of manhood is to safeguard womanhood. When you become a parent, you cannot shirk this responsibility to be concerned for the dating of your own children.

Before my first mission, when I was attending the university, I invited a lovely young lady to attend the university's junior prom dinner dance. I had dated this fine girl a few times before. Every time we came home from a date, her father would be in his big leather chair, fully dressed, waiting for us.

As I went to pick her up the evening of the dance at the university, her father said, "What time will you be home?" I responded, "Sir, as you know, this is a special dinner-dance at the university; the dinner is scheduled to be served after the dance, so we would like to stay out later than usual." I added, "You may not wish to wait up for us that late." He simply said, "I will be waiting for you." The dance was special, but the dinner service was terribly slow. I soon developed indigestion. The longer it went, the worse I felt. When we got back to her home, I found the father had kept his promise. There in his big leather chair was this wonderful, concerned family patriarch waiting for one of his fine daughters to be safely back under his own roof. He said something like this, "What keeps you out so late, James?"

### **The covenant of marriage**

It is a grave responsibility and a transcendent blessing when a man and a woman make vows and covenants and receive the ordinances of marriage. When within the covenant of marriage a man and a woman invoke the great powers of creation, they literally become partners with God in creating new human life. Thereafter a man has a sacred obligation of support, care, and protection for his helpmate and the children he has fathered.

### **Women's roles**

In my lifetime the women's role in administering care and mercy has changed. They seem to have less time to magnify the feelings of charity and benevolence that the Prophet Joseph said come naturally to them (see *History of The Church*, 4:605). Life has become harder and more complex; in some ways, it demands more of all of us. It has become more difficult for mothers and wives to meet all of the challenges and expectations that are placed upon them. Our seemingly insatiable appetites for material things suggest that probably these demands could very well increase in the future.

If our good women are to continue in their primary roles as nurturers, teachers, homemakers, and managers, they will need more support and help in order for them to find time to give compassionate service to their families and others. If this help is withheld, our lives, our homes, the Church, and the world will be the poorer, for so much love, gentleness, and understanding will be lost.

You young men have had your mothers to lovingly nurse you when you were ill, wash your clothes, cook your meals, transport you, wait on you, and generally respond to your needs. All my life, a good woman, either my mother or my wife, has prepared most of my nourishment, kept my clothes clean, and provided a loving atmosphere at home. They did this willingly because of their great desire to show their love through service. But marriage and mothering is more than the routine of washing socks, making beds, and putting food on the table. It is also not being taken for granted; it is being appreciated and being appropriately thanked. It also means being helped.

A married woman often has many roles, which may include wife, grandmother, mother, daughter, nurturer, executive, caretaker, friend, sister, and so forth. Even with the additional demands placed upon women in our day, men generally have not responded with commensurate helpfulness. Recent

research indicates that men have increased their helping in the home only twenty-seven additional minutes per week. The conclusion is, "Women are still the primary caretakers and managers" (Mary Lou Simms, "Women Learning to Let Go of Roles—And Guilt, Too," *Deseret News*, 25 Feb. 1988, sec. C, p. 3). They also carry so much of the burdens of the kingdom.

President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., referring to the faithful women of the early Church, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children, stated: "From that time until now woman has comforted and nursed the Church. She has borne more than half the burdens, she has made more than half the sacrifices, she has suffered the most of the heartaches and sorrows" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1940, p. 21).

### The highest, holiest service

The First Presidency of this church has said: "Motherhood is near to divinity. It is the highest, holiest service to be assumed by mankind" (*Messages of the First Presidency*, 6:178). The priesthood cannot work out its destiny, nor can God's purposes be fulfilled, without our

helpmates. Mothers perform a labor the priesthood cannot do. For this supernal gift of life the priesthood should have love unbounded for the mothers of their children. Men should give them honor, gratitude, reverence, respect, and praise. A man who fails to gratefully acknowledge his debt to his own mother who gave him life is insensitive to the Holy Spirit. I wish to acknowledge to both my mother and my wife a debt which is so great I shall never be able to repay it.

In conclusion, I wish to repeat that I do not believe that God's purposes on earth will ever be achieved without the influence, strength, love, support, and special gifts of the elect women of God. They are entitled to our deepest veneration, our fullest appreciation, and our most profound respect. I believe angels attend them in their motherly ministry. That we may so honor them I pray humbly in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Monson

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to listen to Bishop Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

## Bishop Henry B. Eyring

### Value of consistent effort

From the islands of the Pacific to the highlands of South America, I've seen boys working to turn dreams into reality. In fact, I've seen it so often that it merges into one image, one picture. It's of a small boy, maybe nine or ten, in shorts, barefoot, and with a torn shirt. He's on a patch of dirt, alone, and he's looking down at a white-and-black-checkered ball. He takes a step toward it, his leg swings through, and the ball shoots off, about seven feet above the ground, where it might zip past a goalie into the net—except there's no goalie and no net;

there's just the boy and the ball. And then he runs to the ball, puts it in place with his foot, and kicks it. And he does it over and over again.

You don't know where he lives, but you know that he'll take the ball home with him and that more than likely he keeps it near the place he sleeps. He sees it when he gets up and when he goes to bed. He may even dream about that ball shooting toward the goal.

You know that because you've done something like it yourself. It may have been a basketball. I can remember looking down at the ball in my hands on one freezing winter day and seeing my bloody

fingerprints on the ball. I'd been outside so long that the cold had cracked the skin on my fingertips, but my mind and my eye were on the orange rim. I can still remember it, including the chipped paint on the front edge of the rim where you'd lock your eye and know the ball would fall just past that spot into the dirt-stained net. I can still remember the mark on the driveway I'd dribble to and know I was at the top of the key. I'd spin and jump for that last second shot, with the score tied. And I'd do it again and again, sometimes for hours, feeling neither time nor the cold.

You may have learned endurance playing a trumpet, or throwing a football, or riding a bucking horse, or drawing a picture. But you learned what we all did. Effort only "now and then" didn't take you far. The dreams that turned into reality stuck with you nearly all the time. You worked at them, either in fact or in your thoughts, every day and almost every hour.

### **"Watch over the church always"**

It shouldn't surprise us, then, that the Lord has said to you and to me, "Watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them" (D&C 20:53). God loves us, and he intends for us to become like him. He doesn't ask us now to worry about all his children in all the world, as he does. Instead, he begins with a call to watch over just a few families, just a few people. But he knows that to visit thirty minutes every month with the same lesson for every family would never produce the progress he wants for us.

And so he commands, "Watch over [them] always, and be with and strengthen them." You can't be with them twenty-four hours a day. That would be "always," wouldn't it? But they can be in your heart always. If you'll think about the families you visit, those of you who are blessed to be called home teachers, you know the help they need is beyond your casual effort.

In my experience, I've been assigned to watch over people who struggled with divorce, with financial

ruin, with children who would not respond to all that parents had done, or with disease that would not respond to all that faith and medicine could do. I've gone to a home where little twin girls were sent to the screen door to tell us that Mommy and Daddy were sleeping and couldn't we come another time.

I knew in my heart that effort "now and then" wasn't enough, that "going out home teaching" or even "giving a good lesson" wouldn't do it. God called us to watch over and help people in all their struggles for physical and spiritual well-being. He called us to help by the Spirit. He called us to teach by the Spirit. He called us to live what we teach. He called us to bear testimony. He called us to love them.

Now, he didn't make it that hard just to test you. He gave you so high a calling because he loves you. He wants you home again, and to get there you have to become like him. So he gives you a calling that can only be done with persistence and endurance.

### **Prepare to go home teaching**

Let's talk tonight as if you and I were companions. I know we may not have gotten together often to prepare, but let's do it tonight. Let's imagine that you and I are at my house. You've come over for a few minutes, and we're sitting at my kitchen table.

We won't talk about home teaching visits or lessons first. We'll talk about our families for a while. We'll find that some of them are struggling. And that will humble us, knowing that the Lord is counting on us. We might talk about what we know the bishop and the Relief Society and some neighbors are doing to help. And we might talk about some things we have done and could do.

Then, we'll get around to talking about one family and what we might teach them. I'll push the April *Ensign* across the table to you, opened to the First Presidency message from President Benson. You look down and see the title, "Seek the Spirit of the Lord." That looks like the perfect lesson, doesn't it? There's only the mom and dad at home. They

worry about her health problems, wondering if they're doing all they can and should. On top of that, they probably aren't sleeping much because of their son. He's still in the same town, but he's living with his friends. He won't be there when we call, but he'll be in their minds, and what he's doing and not doing will be tearing at their hearts. They'll be wondering what they can do for him. If people ever wanted and needed the Spirit of the Lord, these folks do.

Let's agree that we'll both prepare the lesson. But I think they have such respect for you that you ought to take the lead. We can't do them any good unless the Holy Ghost is with us, so I guess we'd better do more than prepare the lesson. We'd better prepare ourselves.

### Be worthy to receive the Holy Ghost

First, the Holy Ghost can't be with us unless we're clean. I admire the way you try to watch what you say and do, even what you think. I guess when the Lord tells us to watch over the Church, that means watching over ourselves too. Let's read this quotation from President George Q. Cannon I keep handy. And let's agree that we'll try to follow it:

"Some people have an idea that because they have entered the waters of baptism and repented of their sins then that is an end of it. What a mistake! We need to have this spirit of repentance continually; we need to pray to God to show us our conduct every day. Every night before we retire to rest we should review the thoughts, words and acts of the day and then repent of everything we have done that is wrong or that has grieved the Holy Spirit. Live this way every day and endeavor to progress every day" (*Gospel Truth*, comp. Jerreld L. Newquist, 2 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957], 1:164).

### Pray about the family's needs

Second, let's pray both for forgiveness and to get answers about what to do for the family. It would help if, when we go, we tell them that the Holy Ghost can

guide them; it has already guided us to do something for them. If we pray and then feel that prompting and act on it, what we do may be more important than anything we say. Maybe our finding out how to help them will lead them to find out what more they can do for their son.

Let's agree that we'll include both the parents and their children in our personal prayers, and we'll plead for the Holy Ghost to help us teach. You remember the promise, "And the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach" (D&C 42:14). That really fits us, doesn't it?

### Study the scriptures

Third, we're going to be teaching a gospel principle, so we'd better study and ponder the scriptures. You remember that the Lord said, "Teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in the which is the fullness of the gospel" (D&C 42:12). I know you've been reading the Book of Mormon regularly. So have I. Why don't we think about our family and the gifts of the Spirit while we read? If we do, I'm sure that we'll understand and feel some things that are new to us. And we'll teach and bear testimony in their home with more power.

It won't hurt to bear testimony from our own experience that we felt the Spirit while we read the scriptures. Then they may try reading and pondering. If they do, they'll get the prompting of the Holy Ghost for themselves. And that will help them more than just feeling it when we're there.

Then we'll have a prayer together before you leave. In the next day or two we may stop by the house to do something for the family before we get there for a lesson.

### Help others taste the gospel fruit

The night we teach them, things will seem about as they have before, with a few exceptions. An idea and a scripture will come into your mind as you teach. You'll bear testimony of the Savior with

more feeling. Perhaps we will both find our hearts drawn out to the people more. And they may linger at the door a little longer than usual as we go.

Maybe only some of that will happen. But that won't discourage us. We thought it would take repeated, steady effort. The desire of our hearts is to help others taste the fruit of the gospel. We know it won't come quickly or easily after a single effort, for them or for us. But in that visit, or in one that will come later, you will feel a warmth in your heart and truth will come into your mind. And that will bring you joy. It may go away, but you will remember it. Then you will be able to imagine what it would be like to have the Holy Ghost for your constant companion in this life and to feel the love and approval of the Savior and your Father in Heaven for eternity.

Alma knew what having that desire in our hearts and visualizing it with faith would mean to us. It would keep us going when the going was hard. Here's what he said: "And thus, if ye will not nourish the word, looking forward with an eye of faith to the fruit thereof, ye can never pluck of the fruit of the tree of life.

"But if ye will nourish the word, yea, nourish the tree as it beginneth to grow, by your faith with great diligence, and with patience, looking forward to the fruit thereof, it shall take root; and behold it shall be a tree springing up unto everlasting life" (Alma 32:40-41).

By the power of the Holy Ghost and with the eye of faith, we have glimpsed and we can look forward to the fruit of the gospel. That is the desire of our hearts. And wanting it will give us the power to keep going, with great diligence and patience.

The little boy in my memory keeps kicking that ball, over and over again. I can't see a goalpost or a goalie. I can't hear the roar of the crowd. But in his mind, he can. And so he kicks the ball, over and over again.

### **Home teaching requires whole hearts**

I pray that we will take the great opportunity God has given us to prepare ourselves. He has trusted us as watchmen of the souls of his children. He has given us a way to look forward to the fruit of the gospel by giving us a calling that requires our whole hearts. As the boy's dreams of kicking the winning goal draw him back to persistent practice with that ball, so our vision of the fruits of the gospel will draw us back to persistent repentance and prayer and study and service.

I pray that the Lord may say of us, as Alma said of his son Shiblon: "And now, my son, I trust that I shall have great joy in you, because of your steadiness and your faithfulness unto God; for as you have commenced in your youth to look to the Lord your God, even so I hope that you will continue in keeping his commandments; for blessed is he that endureth to the end" (Alma 38:2).

I bear testimony that in time and in eternity God will bless our steadiness as we invite his children to come unto Christ. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Monson**

He who has just spoken to us is Bishop Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric. President Benson has suggested that I next speak to you.

## **President Thomas S. Monson**

### **A royal priesthood**

David declares in one of his beautiful and moving psalms, "O Lord our

Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! . . .

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (Psalm 8:1, 3-4).

Job, that righteous man of old, joined in the question when he asked, "What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?" (Job 7:17).

One need not grope for answers to these penetrating questions when in your presence here in the historic Tabernacle or with you in the many meeting places throughout the world where you have assembled. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9). "Ye . . . are . . . a spiritual house, an holy priesthood" (1 Peter 2:5).

### **We can make a difference**

As bearers of the priesthood, we have been placed on earth in troubled times. We live in a complex world with currents of conflict everywhere to be found. Political machinations ruin the stability of nations, despots grasp for power, and segments of society seem forever downtrodden, deprived of opportunity and left with a feeling of failure.

We who have been ordained to the priesthood of God can make a difference. When we qualify for the help of the Lord, we can build boys, we can mend men, we can accomplish miracles in His holy service. Our opportunities are without limit.

### **Be worthy to obtain heavenly help**

Though the task looms large, we are strengthened by the truth: "The greatest force in this world today is the power of God as it works through man." If we are on the Lord's errand, we are entitled to the Lord's help. That divine help, however, is predicated upon our worthiness. To sail safely the seas of mortality, to perform a human rescue mission, we need the guidance of that eternal mariner—even the great Jehovah. We reach out, we reach up, to obtain heavenly help.

Are our reaching hands clean? Are our yearning hearts pure? Looking backward in time through the pages of history,

we glean a lesson on worthiness from the words of the dying King Darius.

"Darius . . . through the proper rites had been recognized as legitimate King of Egypt; his rival Alexander had been declared the legitimate Son of Amon—he too was Pharaoh. . . . Alexander found the defeated Darius on the point of death in his tent, and . . . laid his hands upon his head to heal him, commanding him to arise and resume his kingly power, and concluding his blessing: 'I swear unto thee, Darius, by all the gods that I do these things truly and without faking.' [Darius] replied with a gentle rebuke: 'Alexander my boy . . . do you think you can touch heaven with those hands of yours?'" (in Hugh Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981], p. 192).

### **The harbor of forgiveness**

An inspiring lesson is learned from a "Viewpoint" article which appeared recently in the *Church News* section of the *Deseret News*. May I quote:

"To some it may seem strange to see ships of many nations loading and unloading cargo along the docks at Portland, Ore. That city is 100 miles from the ocean. Getting there involves a difficult, often turbulent passage over the bar guarding the Columbia River and a long trip up the Columbia and Willamette rivers.

"But ship captains like to tie up at Portland. They know that as their ships travel the seas, a curious saltwater shellfish called a barnacle fastens itself to the hull and stays there for the rest of its life, surrounding itself with a rocklike shell. As more and more barnacles attach themselves, they increase the ship's drag, slow its progress, decrease its efficiency.

"Periodically, the ship must go into dry dock, where with great effort the barnacles are chiseled or scraped off. It's a difficult, expensive process that ties up the ship for days.

"But not if the captain can get his ship to Portland. Barnacles can't live in fresh water. There, in the sweet, fresh water

of the Willamette or Columbia, the barnacles loosen and fall away, and the ship returns to its task lightened and renewed.

"Sins are like those barnacles. Hardly anyone goes through life without picking up some. They increase the drag, slow our progress, decrease our efficiency. Unrepented, building up one on another, they can eventually sink us.

"In His infinite love and mercy, our Lord has provided a harbor where, through repentance, our barnacles fall away and are forgotten. With our souls lightened and renewed, we can go efficiently about our work and His" ("Harbor of Forgiveness," 30 Jan. 1988, p. 16).

### **Pioneers: models to follow**

A loving Heavenly Father has provided for our guidance models to follow, men who made a difference in their own times. I choose to call these noble souls "pioneers." Webster defines a pioneer: "One who goes before, showing others the way to follow."

With faith as their moving power, they sailed upstream against the currents of doubt which surrounded them. We cannot help but be inspired in our efforts as we remember their examples.

From Nephi: "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded" (1 Nephi 3:7).

From Samuel: "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22).

From Paul: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16).

From Job: "I know that my redeemer liveth" (Job 19:25).

From Joseph: "I am calm as a summer's morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men" (D&C 135:4).

### **Pioneers of today**

These noble leaders made a difference in their own times. What about today? How about me?

The world felt the quickening pace of activity when President Spencer W.

Kimball declared, "We must lengthen our stride." He stepped forward and the Church followed.

When President Ezra Taft Benson warned that we had neglected the Book of Mormon and urged every member to read and study this sacred volume, new printing presses were required to produce more and more copies of the book, as boys and girls and men and women followed the prophet in his own reading and in his inspired declaration. Every day letters arrive at the President's office which testify to the enrichment of lives which comes from reading the Book of Mormon. They tell of families united, goals attained, and souls saved. Such is the power of a prophet.

We do not have a monopoly on goodness. There are God-fearing men and women in all nations who influence for good those with whom they associate. I think of the founder of Scouting, even Lord Baden-Powell, and those who teach and live the principles he advocated. Who can measure the far-reaching effect on human lives of the Scout Oath:

"On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

Impossible of calculation is the result for good when men and boys observe the Scout Law: trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

### **Influence of personal testimonies**

The influence of your personal testimonies is ever so far reaching. The Lord instructed, "The testimony which ye have borne is recorded in heaven for the angels to look upon; and they rejoice over you, and your sins are forgiven you" (D&C 62:3).

He also cautioned us, "With some I am not well pleased, for they will not open their mouths, but they hide the talent which I have given unto them, because of the fear of man" (D&C 60:2).

You never know when your turn will come to comply with the admonition of Peter to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15).

Some years ago I had the opportunity to address a business convention in Dallas, Texas, sometimes called "the city of churches." After the convention, I took a sightseeing bus ride about the city's suburbs. Our driver would comment, "On the left you see the Methodist church," or "There on the right is the Catholic cathedral."

As we passed a beautiful red brick building situated upon a hill, the driver exclaimed, "That building is where the Mormons meet." A lady from the rear of the bus asked, "Driver, can you tell us something more about the Mormons?" The driver steered the bus to the side of the road, turned about in his seat, and replied, "Lady, all I know about the Mormons is that they meet in that red brick building. Is there anyone on this bus who knows anything about the Mormons?"

I gazed at the expression on each person's face for some sign of recognition, some desire to comment. I found nothing—not a sign. Then I realized the truth of the statement, "When the time for decision arrives, the time for preparation is past." For the next fifteen minutes I had the privilege of sharing with others my testimony concerning The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The seeds of testimony frequently do not at once take root and flower. Bread cast upon the water returns, at times, only after many days.

I answered the ring of my telephone one evening to hear a voice ask, "Are you related to an Elder Monson who years ago served in the New England Mission?" I answered that such was not the case. The caller introduced himself as a Brother Leonardo Gambardella and then mentioned that an Elder Monson and an Elder Bonner called at his home long ago and bore their personal testimonies to him. He had listened but had done nothing further to apply their teachings. Subsequently he

moved to California where, after thirteen years, he again found the truth and was converted and baptized. Brother Gambardella then asked if there were a way he could reach these elders who had first visited with him, that he might express to them his profound gratitude for their testimonies, which had remained with him.

I checked the records. I located the elders. Can you imagine their surprise when, now married with families of their own, I telephoned them and told them the good news—even the culmination of their early efforts. They remembered Brother Gambardella and, at my suggestion, telephoned him to extend their congratulations and welcome him into the Church.

### We can work miracles

You can make a difference. Whom the Lord calls, the Lord qualifies. This promise extends not only to missionaries, but also to home teachers, quorum leaders, presidents of branches, and bishops of wards. When we qualify ourselves by our worthiness, when we strive with faith nothing wavering to fulfill the duties appointed to us, when we seek the inspiration of the Almighty in the performance of our responsibilities, we can achieve the miraculous.

Brethren, let us hearken to the hymn "Improve the Shining Moments":

Time flies on wings of lightning;

We cannot call it back.

It comes, then passes forward  
Along its onward track.

And if we are not mindful,  
The chance will fade away,  
For life is quick in passing.

'Tis as a single day.

(*Hymns* [1985], no. 226)

As we leave this general priesthood meeting, let us all determine to shed any barnacles of sin, to prepare for our time of opportunity, and to honor the priesthood we bear through the service we render, the lives we bless, and the souls we are privileged to help save. You are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9), and you can



make a difference. To these truths I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," following which President

Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, will speak to us.

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The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

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## President Gordon B. Hinckley

There are thousands of boys here in the Tabernacle tonight, and I think I would like to talk to you. Some of you are twelve years of age.

When I was twelve, two things of great significance occurred in my life.

### Becoming a Boy Scout

I became a Boy Scout. We did not have the Cub Scout program then, and a boy had to be twelve to be a Scout. This was 1922, only nine years after the Church adopted the Scout program. I lived in a very large ward by today's standards. There were more than eleven hundred people in that ward. We had a large troop, and we met in the cultural hall of the old First Ward. We made a lot of noise. The floors were of hardwood; the walls were hard and smooth, and the sound bounced around them. Our Scoutmaster had a whistle which he blew frequently to get order.

I filled out an application and paid the fifty-cent registration fee, which seemed like a lot of money at the time. I learned the Scout motto: "Be Prepared." I learned the Scout slogan: "Do a Good Turn Daily." I learned the Scout Oath: "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

I learned the Scout Law: "A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, reverent." (We said it just about that fast.) And when we recited the law, one of the boys always added, "A Scout is hungry." I think it was literally true. He came from a very large

family, and getting enough to eat was always a challenge.

### Becoming a deacon

When I was twelve, I also became a deacon in the Aaronic Priesthood. My name was presented to the entire congregation of our ward. Everyone was asked to sustain me if they felt me worthy of the office. All hands in the large congregation went up. I was honored to think that all of the members of my ward raised their hands in my behalf.

Then two men, good and true and faithful—one of them my father—placed their hands upon my head and conferred upon me the Aaronic Priesthood and ordained me to the office of deacon. I did not have any oath, slogan, motto, or law to memorize in connection with this. But I did memorize section 13 of the Doctrine and Covenants, and I have remembered it ever since. These are the words of an angel. They are the words of John the Baptist when he conferred the Aaronic Priesthood upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on May 15, 1829:

"Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness."

Unlike Scouting, we did not have one large deacons quorum that met in the cultural hall. Rather, we were divided into four quorums, with up to twelve boys in each. I thought it was a good arrangement because there were fewer of

us in a group, with less noise and a more intimate relationship between us and our priesthood leader. I later learned that this number had been wisely designated by the Lord in revelation. He said, "And again, verily I say unto you, the duty of a president over the office of a deacon is to preside over twelve deacons, to sit in council with them, and to teach them their duty, edifying one another" (D&C 107:85).

### **Aaronic Priesthood a gift from God**

Now I am not in any way disparaging Scouting. It is a wonderful program. It is the Church's activity program for boys in many areas of the world.

But I feel that the most important program for boys in the Church is that of the Aaronic Priesthood.

Scouting is an excellent and wonderful program that has come of the wisdom of men. The Aaronic Priesthood is a gift from God.

### **John the Baptist restored the Aaronic Priesthood**

Now, as a boy I knew from what I had learned in Sunday School that John the Baptist had been killed by a wicked ruler, that he had been beheaded to satisfy the lustful desire of an evil woman. And in 1829 it was this same John who had come and given the priesthood to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. He spoke to them. He placed his hands upon their heads. They heard his voice and they felt his hands. This meant that he had to have been resurrected. That was a wonderful thing and a very impressive thing to me. Here was living evidence of the reality of the Resurrection, which had come through the divine power of the Lord Jesus Christ—the same who earlier had been baptized by John in the river Jordan.

John told Joseph and Oliver that he was acting under the direction of Peter, James, and John, the Apostles who had been ordained by the Lord and who held what we call the Melchizedek, or the higher, Priesthood, as distinguished from the Aaronic, or the lesser, Priesthood.

Joseph Smith was then twenty-three years of age. Oliver Cowdery was about the same. They were young men, and I thought when I was ordained a deacon what a wonderful thing it was that John the Baptist, who was a great man in the New Testament and who lived nearly two thousand years earlier, had come as a resurrected being and that he should address Joseph and Oliver as "my fellow servants."

Even though he came as a servant of God and acted under the direction of Peter, James, and John, he did not place himself above Joseph and Oliver. He put them on his same level when he addressed them as "my fellow servants." If they were his fellow servants, then perhaps I, as a twelve-year-old boy, could also be his fellow servant.

He spoke in the name of Messiah, or, as we would say it, "in the name of Jesus Christ." He set the pattern, and since then, the ordinances which we perform are administered in the name of Jesus Christ. This is something we should never forget, and never overlook, for in the exercise of our priesthood, we are acting in behalf of God our Eternal Father and Jesus Christ, His Son.

### **The name of the Aaronic Priesthood**

In the authority that was John's, he conferred the Priesthood of Aaron. Why did he use that expression? Who was Aaron?

Aaron was the brother of Moses. He was three years older than Moses. When the Lord called Moses as the leader of the children of Israel while they were in Egypt, Moses protested that he had a stammering tongue and that he was not capable of leadership. The Lord did not accept his excuse, but, rather, He told Moses that he should be the leader and that his brother Aaron should be his voice.

Moses and Aaron went together to ask Pharaoh to let the children of Israel leave Egypt. Pharaoh was angry each time they went. Aaron had a rod, and when he dropped it on the floor before the ruler, it became a serpent.

When the children of Israel eventually fled Egypt under Moses' leadership, Aaron was his assistant. He was of the tribe of Levi and was given the holy priesthood, with the promise that certain elements of that priesthood should be given to and be exercised by those of his tribe through all of the generations to come. This priesthood, or this lesser portion of the higher priesthood, came to be known as the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood.

Aaron lived to the good age of 123, and his authority was passed to his son to be passed down through those generations who would be worthy of it.

### Keys of the ministering of angels

Now what are the elements of this priesthood which were restored to the earth by John the Baptist?

He said that this priesthood of Aaron "holds the keys of the ministering of angels" (D&C 13:1). It is a tremendous thing to have the right to the ministering of angels.

When President Wilford Woodruff was an elderly man, he said to the young men of the Church:

"I desire to impress upon you the fact that it does not make any difference whether a man is a Priest or an Apostle, if he magnifies his calling. A Priest holds the keys of the ministering of angels. Never in my life, as an Apostle, as a Seventy, or as an Elder, have I ever had more of the protection of the Lord than while holding the office of a Priest. The Lord revealed to me by visions, by revelations, and by the Holy Spirit, many things that lay before me" (*Millennial Star*, 5 Oct. 1891, p. 629).

On Sunday, February 28, 1897, ninety-one years ago, a great meeting was held here in this Salt Lake Tabernacle. It was to honor President Woodruff on his ninetieth birthday. The Tabernacle was beautifully decorated. There was appropriate music with talks of tribute. Then President Woodruff, old and somewhat crippled, stood to speak, and he said to the young men:

"I have passed through the periods of boyhood, early manhood and old age. I cannot expect to tarry a great while longer with you, but I want to give to you a few words of counsel. You occupy a position in the Church and Kingdom of God and have received the power of the holy priesthood. The God of heaven has appointed you and called you forth in this day and generation. I want you to look at this. Young men listen to the counsel of your brethren. Live near to God; pray while young; learn to pray; learn to cultivate the Holy Spirit of God; link it to you and it will become a spirit of revelation unto you, inasmuch as you nourish it" (in Matthias Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, 2nd ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1916], pp. 602-3).

President Woodruff had an inspired view of this remarkable and wonderful blessing which may be enjoyed by every boy who holds the Aaronic Priesthood and lives worthy of it. That key is the gift of the ministering of angels. I am convinced that the Lord would not have given it to us had he not desired that we have it so that we might enjoy the wonderful gifts, guidance, and protection which come therefrom.

### Keys of the gospel of repentance

John the Baptist went on to say to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery that this priesthood, which he bestowed upon them, included the keys of the gospel of repentance. What a marvelous and wonderful thing this is! It is our privilege, yours and mine, as those who hold this priesthood, to repent of evil with the expectation that we will be forgiven if we live worthy of the forgiveness of the Lord. Furthermore, it is our privilege to preach repentance, as the Lord has made clear in section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants. He there sets forth the duties of deacons, teachers, and priests. It is their responsibility to watch over the Church and see that there is no iniquity and to invite all to come unto Christ. That involves repentance from sin and obedience to the principles and laws of the gospel.

## Keys of baptism

This Aaronic Priesthood, bestowed by John the Baptist, also includes the keys of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. It is one thing to repent. It is another to have our sins remitted or forgiven. The power to bring this about is found in the Aaronic Priesthood.

Baptism is the primary ordinance of the gospel. It is the gate through which all come into the Church. It is so important that it is performed not only for the living but also for the dead, because those who are beyond the veil of death cannot move forward on the way to eternal life without this ordinance having been administered in their behalf.

## Importance of the Aaronic Priesthood

I want to emphasize, boys, that the holding of the Aaronic Priesthood, and the exercise of its power, is not a small or unimportant thing. The bestowal of these keys in this dispensation was one of the greatest and most significant things incident to the entire Restoration. It was the first bestowal of divine authority in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times. It is the priesthood of God, with authority to act in the name of the Savior of mankind.

It is the authority under which the emblems of the Lord's Supper are administered to the membership of the Church. That great and important sacrament was instituted by the Savior himself shortly before His crucifixion. It was He who first gave to those He loved the emblems of His flesh and blood and commanded that all should partake of them in remembrance of Him and as a token of a covenant between God and man.

When you priests of the Aaronic Priesthood administer the sacrament, you are doing what Jesus did while He was yet in the flesh, and which He also did when He ministered among the Nephites following His resurrection.

When you, as a priest, kneel at the sacrament table and offer up the prayer, which came by revelation, you place the entire congregation under covenant with

the Lord. Is this a small thing? It is a most important and remarkable thing.

## Importance of being worthy

Now, my dear young brethren, if we are to enjoy the ministering of angels, if we are to teach the gospel of repentance, if we are to baptize by immersion for the remission of sins, if we are to administer to the membership of the Church the emblems of the sacrifice of our Lord, then we must be worthy to do so.

You cannot consistently so serve on the Sabbath and fail to live the standards of the Church during the week. It is totally wrong for you to take the name of the Lord in vain and indulge in filthy and unseemly talk at school or at work, and then kneel at the sacrament table on Sunday. You cannot drink beer or partake of illegal drugs and be worthy of the ministering of angels. You cannot be immoral in talk or in practice and expect the Lord to honor your service in teaching repentance or baptizing for the remission of sins. As those holding His holy priesthood, you must be worthy fellow servants.

I would not wish to leave the impression that these abhorrent practices are common among the young men of the Church, but I know that they are not entirely absent. Most of you are trying to do the right thing, and I compliment you most warmly. But if there be any here who are not doing the right thing, then I plead with you, and I invoke upon you the spirit of repentance, the keys of which you hold as those endowed with the Aaronic Priesthood. Make yourselves worthy in every respect, and the Lord will bless you. You will have peace in your hearts and a greater sense of the remarkable power which has been given to you under this greatest of all programs for young men, this program which has come from the Lord Himself for the blessing of young men and those to whom they minister.

I bear my witness and testimony of these things as I invoke the blessings of the Lord upon you, His servants, who have been endowed with His power. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## President Monson

President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has just spoken to us.

We shall now be privileged to listen to the counsel of our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson. He will be our concluding speaker.

Before President Benson speaks, we note that the nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir Broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 daylight saving time Sunday morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

We change to daylight saving time at 2:00 A.M. tonight, so please move your

clocks ahead one hour to ensure that you will be here when the conference convenes tomorrow.

As you leave this priesthood meeting tonight, we ask you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving.

We are grateful to you brethren from the Ogden and Mount Ogden regions for your inspiring music this evening. Thank you.

Following President Benson's closing remarks, the choir will sing "Rise Up, O Men of God."

The benediction will then be offered by Elder Adney Y. Komatsu of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## President Ezra Taft Benson

My dear brethren of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood, how happy I am to be with you this evening.

I rejoice in the messages of my brethren who have preceded me, and I now ask you for your faith and prayers in my behalf as I address you.

For some time I have wanted to speak directly to the great body of single adult brethren of the Church. Many of you have served full-time missions. Many of you are giving outstanding service in your wards and stakes.

To you single adult brethren, I want you to know of my great love for each of you. I have great expectations for you and a great hope in you. You have so much to contribute to the Lord and to the kingdom of God now and in the future. You may be twenty-seven years of age, or thirty, or possibly even older.

### Examine priorities

Just what are your priorities at this time in your life?

May I suggest for your careful consideration the counsel we give to returning missionaries. This counsel applies just as much to those who have been home for a while as to those who may

not have served full-time missions for the Church.

Here are some of the priorities we pray that you single adult brethren will consider to be essential in your life.

First, continue to draw close to the Savior through private, sincere, heartfelt prayer. Remember always, "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

"Feast upon the words of Christ" (2 Nephi 32:3) by consistently studying the scriptures every day and by following the counsel of the living prophets. Particularly make the study of the Book of Mormon a lifetime pursuit and daily sup

port your leaders, and otherwise keep the commandments. Serve cheerfully and gratefully in every calling you receive. Live worthy of a temple recommend and enjoy the sweet, sacred spirit that comes from frequent temple attendance.

Dress and groom yourself in a way that reflects your lifelong commitment to share the gospel with others.

Be thoughtful, loving, helpful, and appreciative of your family as you seek to deepen those eternal relationships.

In your dating and courting, fully maintain the standards of the Church. Be morally clean. "Let virtue garnish [your] thoughts unceasingly" (D&C 121:45).

Remember the counsel of Elder Bruce R. McConkie that "the most important single thing that any Latter-day Saint ever does in this world is to marry the right person in the right place by the right authority" (*Choose an Eternal Companion*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [Provo, 3 May 1966], p. 2).

Understand that temple marriage is essential to your salvation and exaltation.

Carefully select practical and worthwhile goals and, in an organized way, work to reach them.

Apply yourself prayerfully and diligently to selecting and pursuing academic and vocational goals.

Share the gospel and your testimony with those who are not members of the Church or who are less active.

Improve your community by active participation and service. Remember in your civic responsibility that "the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing" (Edmund Burke, in George Seldes, comp., *The Great Thoughts* [New York: Ballantine Books, 1985], p. 60). Do something meaningful in defense of your God-given freedom and liberty.

Remember that your entire life is a mission and that each new phase of it can be richly rewarding as you magnify your talents and take advantage of your opportunities.

### Importance of celestial marriage

May I now say an additional word about an eternal opportunity and responsibility to which I have referred earlier and which is of greatest importance to you. I am referring to celestial marriage.

Just a few weeks ago, I received a letter from two devoted parents, part of which reads as follows:

"Dear President Benson: We are concerned about what seems to be a

growing problem—at least in this part of the Church familiar to us—that is, so many choice young men in the Church over the age of thirty who are still unmarried.

"We have sons thirty, thirty-one, and thirty-three in this situation. Many of our friends also are experiencing this same concern for unmarried sons and daughters."

Their letter continues:

"In our experience these are usually young men who have been on missions, are well educated, and are living the commandments (except this most important one). There does not appear to be a lack of choice young ladies in the same age bracket who could make suitable companions.

"It is most frustrating to us, as their parents, who sometimes feel we have failed in our parental teachings and guiding responsibilities."

My dear single adult brethren, we are also concerned. We want you to know that the position of the Church has never changed regarding the importance of celestial marriage. It is a commandment of God. The Lord's declaration in Genesis is still true: "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18).

### Do not risk greatest joys

To obtain a fulness of glory and exaltation in the celestial kingdom, one must enter into this holiest of ordinances.

Without marriage, the purposes of the Lord would be frustrated. Choice spirits would be withheld from the experience of mortality. And postponing marriage unduly often means limiting your posterity, and the time will come, brethren, when you will feel and know that loss.

I can assure you that the greatest responsibility and the greatest joys in life are centered in the family, honorable marriage, and rearing a righteous posterity. And the older you become, the less likely you are to marry, and then you may lose these eternal blessings altogether.

President Spencer W. Kimball recounted an experience he once had:

"Recently I met a young returned missionary who is 35 years old. He had been home from his mission for 14 years and yet he was little concerned about his bachelorhood, and laughed about it.

"I shall feel sorry for this young man when the day comes that he faces the Great Judge at the throne and when the Lord asks this boy: 'Where is your wife?' All of his excuses which he gave to his fellows on earth will seem very light and senseless when he answers the Judge. 'I was very busy,' or 'I felt I should get my education first,' or 'I did not find the right girl'—such answers will be hollow and of little avail. He knew he was commanded to find a wife and marry her and make her happy. He knew it was his duty to become the father of children and provide a rich, full life for them as they grew up. He knew all this, yet postponed his responsibility" ("The Marriage Decision," *Ensign*, Feb. 1975, p. 2).

### Replace fears with faith

I realize that some of you brethren may have genuine fears regarding the real responsibilities that will be yours if you do marry. You are concerned about being able to support a wife and family and provide them with the necessities in these uncertain economic times. Those fears must be replaced with faith.

I assure you, brethren, that if you will be industrious, faithfully pay your tithes and offerings, and conscientiously keep the commandments, the Lord will sustain you. Yes, there will be sacrifices required, but you will grow from these and will be a better man for having met them.

Work hard educationally and in your vocation. Put your trust in the Lord, have faith, and it will work out. The Lord never gives a commandment without providing the means to accomplish it (see 1 Nephi 3:7).

Also, do not be caught up in materialism, one of the real plagues of our generation—that is, acquiring things,

fast-paced living, and securing career success in the single state.

Honorable marriage is more important than wealth, position, and status. As husband and wife, you can achieve your life's goals together. As you sacrifice for each other and your children, the Lord will bless you, and your commitment to the Lord and your service in His kingdom will be enhanced.

### Expectations of a mate

Now, brethren, do not expect perfection in your choice of a mate. Do not be so particular that you overlook her most important qualities of having a strong testimony, living the principles of the gospel, loving home, wanting to be a mother in Zion, and supporting you in your priesthood responsibilities.

Of course, she should be attractive to you, but do not just date one girl after another for the sole pleasure of dating without seeking the Lord's confirmation in your choice of your eternal companion.

And one good yardstick as to whether a person might be the right one for you is this: in her presence, do you think your noblest thoughts, do you aspire to your finest deeds, do you wish you were better than you are?

God bless you single adult brethren of the Church. May your priorities be right. I have suggested some very important priorities this evening. May you seriously consider and ponder them.

Know, my good brethren, that I have spoken from my heart and by His Spirit because of my love and concern for you. It is what the Lord would have you hear today. With all my heart I echo the words of the prophet Lehi from the Book of Mormon, "Arise from the dust, my sons, and be men" (2 Nephi 1:21), in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The choir sang "Rise Up, O Men of God."

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu offered the benediction.

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## SECOND DAY MORNING SESSION

The fourth session of the 158th Annual General Conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 3, 1988. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and John Longhurst at the organ.

Before the session, the choir sang "Come, Rejoice" without announcement.

President Hinckley made the following remarks:

### **President Gordon B. Hinckley**

We welcome you this beautiful Easter morning from the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah, in this, the fourth general session of the 158th annual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, who presides at this conference, has asked me, Brother Hinckley, to conduct.

We acknowledge the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and in the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders Jacob de Jager and Russell C. Taylor are seated on the stand. We extend our greetings to those of

you participating by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission. We are grateful to the owners and operators of these facilities for assisting in this great conference.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together.

The Tabernacle Choir is providing the music for this session under the direction of Brothers Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger, with Brother John Longhurst at the organ.

The choir opened by singing "Come, Rejoice" and will now sing "Come unto Him," following which Elder Charles Didier, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

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The choir sang "Come unto Him."  
Elder Charles Didier offered the invocation.

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### **President Hinckley**

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our first speaker.

## **President Thomas S. Monson**

### **Life's greatest questions**

Everywhere, people are in a hurry. Jet-powered planes speed their precious human cargo across broad continents and vast oceans. Appointments must be kept, tourist attractions beckon, and friends and family await the arrival of a particular flight. Modern freeways with multiple lanes carry millions of automobiles,

occupied by more millions of people, in a seemingly endless stream.

Does this pulsating, mobile ribbon of humanity ever come to a halt? Is the helter-skelter pace of life ever punctuated with moments of meditation—even thoughts of timeless truths?

When compared to eternal verities, the questions of daily living are really rather trivial. What shall we have for dinner? Is there a good movie playing tonight? Have you seen the television log?



Where shall we go on Saturday? These questions pale in their significance when times of crisis arise, when loved ones are wounded, when pain enters the house of good health, or when life's candle dims and darkness threatens. Then, truth and trivia are soon separated. The soul of man reaches heavenward, seeking a divine response to life's greatest questions: *Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where do we go after we leave this life?*

Answers to these questions are not discovered within the covers of academia's textbooks, by dialing Information, in tossing a coin, or through random selection of multiple-choice responses. These questions transcend mortality. They embrace eternity.

### Where did we come from?

*Where did we come from?* This query is inevitably thought, if not spoken, by every parent or grandparent when a tiny infant utters its first cry. One marvels at the perfectly formed child. The tiny toes, the delicate fingers, the beautiful head, to say nothing of the hidden but marvelous circulatory, digestive, and nervous systems all testify to the truth of a divine Creator.

The Apostle Paul told the Athenians on Mars' Hill that we are "the offspring of God" (Acts 17:29). Since we know that our physical bodies are the offspring of our mortal parents, we must probe for the meaning of Paul's statement. The Lord has declared that "the spirit and the body are the soul of man" (D&C 88:15). It is the spirit which is the offspring of God. The writer of Hebrews refers to Him as "the Father of spirits" (Hebrews 12:9). The spirits of all men are literally His "begotten sons and daughters" (D&C 76:24).

We note that inspired poets have, for our contemplation of this subject, written moving messages and recorded transcendent thoughts. William Wordsworth penned the truth:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,

And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come

From God, who is our home:  
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!  
("Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," lines 58–66)

Another writer described a newborn infant as "a sweet, new blossom of humanity, fresh fallen from God's own home to flower here on earth."

### Why are we here?

Parents, gazing down at a tiny infant or taking the hand of a growing child, ponder their responsibility to teach, to inspire, and to provide direction. While parents ponder, children and, particularly, youth ask the penetrating question: "Why are we here?" Usually, it is spoken silently to the soul and phrased: "Why am I here?"

How grateful we should be that a wise Creator fashioned an earth and placed us here, with a veil of forgetfulness of our previous existence, so that we might experience a time of testing, an opportunity to prove ourselves, and qualify for all that God has prepared for us to receive.

Clearly, one primary purpose of our existence upon the earth is to obtain a body of flesh and bones. In a thousand ways, we are privileged to choose for ourselves. Here we learn from the hard taskmaster of experience. We discern between good and evil. We differentiate as to the bitter and the sweet. We discover that decisions determine destiny.

While Paul taught the Philippians that man is called upon to "work out [his] own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12), the Master provided a guide we know as the Golden Rule: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matthew 7:12).

By obedience to God's commandments, we can qualify for that "house"

spoken of by Jesus when He declared: "In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you . . . that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2-3).

Contemplating such far-reaching matters, we reflect upon the helplessness of a newborn child. No better example can be found for total dependency. Needed is nourishment for the body and love for the soul. Mother provides both. She who, with her hand in the hand of God, descended into "the valley of the shadow of death" (Psalm 23:4), that you and I might come forth to life, is not in her maternal mission abandoned by God.

### Never a hopeless dawn

Several years ago, the Salt Lake City newspapers published an obituary notice of a close friend—a mother and wife taken by death in the prime of her life. I visited the mortuary and joined a host of persons gathered to express condolence to the distraught husband and motherless children. Suddenly the smallest child, Kelly, recognized me and took my hand in hers.

"Come with me," she said; and she led me to the casket in which rested the body of her beloved mother. "I'm not crying, Brother Monson, and neither must you. My mommy told me many times about death and life with Heavenly Father. I belong to my mommy and my daddy. We'll all be together again."

Through tear-moistened eyes, I recognized a beautiful and faith-filled smile. To my young friend, whose tiny hand yet clasped mine, there would never be a hopeless dawn. Sustained by her unflinching testimony, knowing that life continues beyond the grave, she, her father, her brothers, her sisters, and indeed all who share this knowledge of divine truth, can declare to the world, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:5).

Life moves on. Youth follows childhood, and maturity comes ever so imperceptibly.

We treasure the inspired thought:

"God is a Father.  
Man is a brother.  
Life is a mission  
And not a career."

(In Stephen L. Richards, *Where Is Wisdom?* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1955], p. 74)

### The great commandments

God, our Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord, have marked the way to perfection. They beckon us to follow eternal verities and to become perfect, as they are perfect (see Matthew 5:48, 3 Nephi 12:48). We remember the inquiring lawyer who asked:

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:36-39).

### The race of life

The Apostle Paul likened life to a race with a clearly defined goal. To the Saints at Corinth he urged:

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain" (1 Corinthians 9:24).

In our zeal, let us not overlook the sage counsel from Ecclesiastes: "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong" (Ecclesiastes 9:11). Actually the prize belongs to him who endures to the end.

When I reflect on the race of life, I remember another type of race, even from childhood days. When I was about ten, my boyfriends and I would take pocket-knives in hand and, from the soft wood of a willow tree, fashion small toy boats. With a triangular-shaped cotton sail in place, each would launch his crude craft

in the race down the relatively turbulent waters of the Provo River. We would run along the river's bank and watch the tiny vessels sometimes bobbing violently in the swift current and at other times sailing serenely as the water deepened.

During such a race, we noted that one boat led all the rest toward the appointed finish line. Suddenly, the current carried it too close to a large whirlpool, and the boat heaved to its side and capsized. Around and around it was carried, unable to make its way back into the main current. At last it came to an uneasy rest at the end of the pool, amid the flotsam and jetsam that surrounded it.

The toy boats of childhood had no keel for stability, no rudder to provide direction, and no source of power. Inevitably their destination was downstream—the path of least resistance.

Unlike toy boats, we have been provided divine attributes to guide our journey. We enter mortality not to float with the moving currents of life, but with the power to think, to reason, and to achieve.

Our Heavenly Father did not launch us on our eternal voyage without providing the means whereby we could receive from Him guidance to ensure our safe return. Yes, I speak of prayer. I speak, too, of the whisperings from that still, small voice within each of us; and I do not overlook the holy scriptures, written by mariners who successfully sailed the seas we too must cross.

### **Our existence after death**

At some period in our mortal mission, there appears the faltering step, the wan smile, the pain of sickness—even the fading of summer, the approach of autumn, the chill of winter, and the experience we call death.

Every thoughtful person has asked himself the question best phrased by Job of old: "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14). Try as we may to put the question out of our thoughts, it always returns. Death comes to all mankind. It comes to the aged as they walk on faltering feet. Its summons is heard by those

who have scarcely reached midway in life's journey, and often it hushes the laughter of little children.

But what of an existence beyond death? Is death the end of all? Such a question was asked of me by a young husband and father who lay dying. I turned to the Book of Mormon and, from the book of Alma, read to him these words:

"Now, concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection—Behold, it has been made known unto me by an angel, that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, yea, the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life.

"And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow" (Alma 40:11–12).

My young friend through moist eyes and with an expression of profound gratitude whispered a silent, but eloquent, "Thank you."

### **Jesus was resurrected**

After the body of Jesus had lain in the tomb for three days, the spirit again entered, and the resurrected Redeemer walked forth clothed with an immortal body of flesh and bones.

The answer to Job's question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" came when Mary and others approached the tomb and saw two men in shining garments who spoke to them: "Why seek ye the living among the dead?

"He is not here, but is risen" (Luke 24:5–6).

Testimonies of the resurrected Lord provide comfort and understanding.

First, from the Apostle Paul:

"Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; . . . he was buried, and . . . he rose again the third day: . . . he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: . . . he was seen of above five

hundred brethren at once; . . . he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (1 Corinthians 15:3-8).

Second, from the combined testimony of twenty-five hundred of His other sheep, as recorded in the Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ, the resurrected Lord "spake unto them saying:

"Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world. . . .

"And when they had all gone forth and had witnessed for themselves, they did cry out with one accord, saying:

"Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God! And they did fall down at the feet of Jesus, and did worship him" (3 Nephi 11:13-14, 16-17).

Third, from Joseph Smith: "After the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That He lives!

"For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

"That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God" (D&C 76:22-24).

As the result of Christ's victory over the grave, we shall all be resurrected. This is the redemption of the soul. Paul wrote:

"There are . . . celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

"There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

"So also is the resurrection of the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:40-42).

It is the celestial glory which we seek. It is in the presence of God we desire to dwell. It is a forever family in which we want membership. Such blessings must be earned.

### An invitation to exaltation

*Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where do we go after this life?* No longer need these universal questions remain unanswered. Our Heavenly Father rejoices for those who keep His commandments. He is concerned also for the lost child, the tardy teenager, the wayward youth, the delinquent parent. Tenderly the Master speaks to these, and indeed to all: "Come back. Come home. Come unto me." What eternal joy awaits when we accept His divine invitation to exaltation.

I testify He is a teacher of truth—but He is more than a teacher. He is the exemplar of the perfect life—but He is more than an exemplar. He is the great physician—but He is more than a physician. He is the literal Savior of the World, the Son of God, the Prince of Peace, the Holy One of Israel, even the risen Lord, who declared: "I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.

" . . . I am the light and the life of the world" (3 Nephi 11:10-11).

"I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father" (D&C 110:4).

As his witness I testify to you that He lives, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The choir sang "How Wondrous and Great" without announcement.

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### President Hinckley

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has just addressed us, followed by the

Tabernacle Choir singing "How Wondrous and Great."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our next speaker.

## Elder M. Russell Ballard

### Appreciate the wonders of nature

Brothers and sisters, this is a beautiful time of year with spring beginning to burst forth in many parts of the world, bringing all of its colors, scents, and cheerful sounds. The miracle of the changing seasons, with the reawakening and rebirth in nature, inspires feelings of love and reverence within us for God's marvelous, creative handiwork.

The Easter season is a good time for people everywhere to appreciate the wonders of nature and give thanks to the Creator of this beautiful world. Men and women in all parts of the world have a desperate need to take time from their demanding routines of everyday life and to quietly observe God's miracles taking place all around them. Think of what would happen if all of us took time to look carefully at the wonders of nature that surround us and devoted ourselves to learning more about this world that God created for us!

My family and I recently had a simple but impressive experience with one of God's creations. I gave my wife, Barbara, a dozen roses for a valentine. They were a delicate shade of peach in color and had a rich scent. Barbara put them in a vase and placed them on the table in our family room. As the days passed, the family watched the blossoms unfold from buds to full flower.

As I watched this miracle, I became curious about roses. I was amazed to learn from a botanist friend that there are thousands of different varieties of roses. Inside each rose is a giant storehouse of genetic coding that develops a seed or a slip into roots, stems, thorns, leaves, colors, and blooms.

Each rose is a compact chemical-processing factory. Using sunlight, the green leaves take carbon dioxide from the

air and replace it with oxygen, which we breathe. When other chemicals within the plant react with sunlight, it produces starch that becomes food. As you know, this process is called photosynthesis, and without it the earth's atmosphere would soon be devoid of oxygen, and most living things would disappear from the earth. My friend told me that the chemical energy and the electrical energy our brains were using at that very moment were once sunlight that was absorbed by the chlorophyll in green vegetation we previously had eaten.

### All creations bear record of God

This experience led me to consider the myriad forms of plant and animal life that thrive in astounding balance upon the earth. My esteem for our little roses took on an element of wonder and reverence. I pondered the power of the creative genius who lovingly provided such marvels for his children. I thought then how important it is for every human soul to see and appreciate the glory and grandeur of God in everything about us. Into my mind came the words and message of a beautiful hymn:

When thru the woods and forest  
glades I wander,  
And hear the birds sing sweetly in  
the trees,  
When I look down from lofty  
mountain grandeur  
And hear the brook and feel the  
gentle breeze,  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God,  
to thee,  
How great thou art! How great thou  
art!  
("How Great Thou Art," *Hymns*  
[1985], no. 86)

I felt a deep reverence for both the creation and the Creator. *Reverence* may

be defined as a profound respect mingled with love and awe. Other words that add to our understanding of reverence include *gratitude, honor, veneration, and admiration*. The root word *revere* also implies an element of fear. Thus, reverence might be understood to mean an attitude of profound respect and love with a desire to honor and show gratitude, with a fear of breaking faith or offending.

In the book of Moses we read, "And behold, all things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: all things bear record of me" (Moses 6:63).

Truly, the heavens and the earth and all things in them evidence the handiwork of God, their Creator. In the Book of Mormon we learn of Korihor, an anti-Christ who was brought to the prophet Alma. He asked for a sign of God's existence before he would believe. "But Alma said unto him: Thou hast had signs enough; will ye tempt your God? Will ye say, Show unto me a sign, when ye have the testimony of all these thy brethren, and also all the holy prophets? The scriptures are laid before thee, yea, and all things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator" (Alma 30:44). These eternal evidences continue to testify to us today.

Astronauts viewing the earth from space have stated how incredibly beautiful it is and how alive it appears. United States Senator Jake Garn wrote of his experience in space: "It is impossible for me to describe the beauty of the earth. It is a breathtaking, awe-inspiring, spiritual experience to view the earth from space while traveling at twenty-five times the speed of sound. I could also look into the blackness of the vacuum of space and see billions of stars and galaxies millions of

light-years away. The universe is so vast as to be impossible to comprehend. But I did comprehend the hand of God in all things. I felt his presence throughout my seven days in space. I know that God created this earth and the universe. I know that we are his children wherever we live on the earth, without regard to our nationality or the color of our skin. Most important, I know that God lives and is the Creator of us all" (letter to M. Russell Ballard, 3 March 1988).

Again, the words of the hymn came to mind:

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder  
Consider all the worlds thy hands  
have made,  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling  
thunder,  
Thy pow'r thruout the universe  
displayed;  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God,  
to thee,  
How great thou art! How great thou  
art!  
("How Great Thou Art")

### The greatest of God's creations

The psalmist wrote, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

"For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour" (Psalm 8:3-5).

The Lord gave an answer to the psalmist's question; it is recorded in the book of Moses: "For mine own purpose have I made these things. . . .

"And by the word of my power, have I created them. . . .

"For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:31-32, 39).

When we look to see the evidence of creation all around us, from a grain of sand to the majestic planets, we begin to

realize that we are the greatest of all God's creations; we are created in his image. I was joyfully reminded of this fact three weeks ago when our twenty-fourth grandchild was born. I was again filled with wonder and love to hold this precious infant in my arms, to contemplate the miracle of birth, and to see a child born into mortality who had come so recently from the presence of our Father in Heaven.

The gift of new life brings a profound feeling of reverence. Parents and other family members are drawn closer together. Even little children sense a feeling of awe and wonder. They want to hold the baby, touch it, run their hands over its warm, soft head, or extend a finger for it to grasp and hold.

Welcoming this new little spirit into our family circle brought home once more to me an incredible truth. I realized again that God created the earth in all its magnificent glory, not as an end in itself, but for us, his children. Indeed, we are his children, his offspring, and he is the Father of our spirits.

### **Revere God's power and majesty**

We sometimes feel great respect and reverence for creative genius as expressed in great art or music. How much more should we revere the power and majesty of our Divine Creator? We may stand in awe of man's creations of beautiful buildings or bridges. But remember the Apostle Paul's words to the Hebrews: "He who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.

"For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God" (Hebrews 3:3-4).

Those who feel no reverence for the creations and the divine attributes of God likely will have little appreciation for other sacred things. Such a lack of veneration for God's creations may diminish until a person becomes totally insensitive to the feelings of others. This, I am afraid, is the condition in some parts of the world.

When we consider people who are irreverent, we may think of those who lack manners, sensitivity, and courtesy,

and who show little or no respect for the finer things or for sacred things. Perhaps some lack reverence for life and for their fellowmen because they do not understand who they are and what they have the potential to become.

### **Expressions of God's love**

God expresses his love for us by providing the guidance we need to progress and reach our potential. Perhaps a simple story will illustrate this point. Recently, a young man purchased a used computer but could not get it to work properly. Soon he became discouraged. His temper grew short and he threatened the inanimate object with painful destruction unless its performance improved. A wise father intervened and took his son to a local vendor, where they obtained an instruction manual. After all, who would know more about a complex computer than the person or company that created it? Who would know most about its capacity and potential? Who would better know the safeguards required to avoid damaging or ruining this fine instrument? Soon the boy enjoyed the full potential of his computer by working within the guidelines given in the instruction book provided by its creator.

Likewise in our lives, he who knows most about us, our potential, and our eternal possibilities has given us divine counsel and commandments in his instruction manuals—the holy scriptures. When we understand and follow these instructions, our lives have purpose and meaning. We learn that our Maker loves us and desires our happiness. In an incomparable manifestation of this divine love for us, he sent his Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16-17).

Jesus was born into mortality. He led a perfect life and, in so doing, marked the path for us to follow. He taught his

disciples, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

### **A gospel of love**

His gospel is a gospel of love—love for God and love for one another. He directs us to follow his example. Our discipleship is measured by how well we comply.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34–35).

Can you imagine what an impact following this instruction would have on society today?

Many people, I fear, never come to understand that the commandments of God are for our benefit and that as we sow, so shall we reap.

### **Ponder the depths of Christ's love**

Our return to our Heavenly Father is through his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus told his disciples, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). He instructed us to keep his commandments if we love him (see v. 15). He taught further that "he that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him" (v. 21).

In the atonement and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we can glimpse the reality of his divine mission to redeem all who will come unto him and will honor and reverence God, our Eternal Father.

We may begin to understand the depths of Christ's love for us when we consider that he was willing to atone and suffer the pain for our sins, "which suffering caused [him], even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer

both body and spirit" (D&C 19:18). Nevertheless, he gave glory to his Father and partook and finished his preparations unto the children of men (see v. 19).

The crowning words of the inspired hymn continue:

And when I think that God, his Son  
not sparing,  
Sent him to die, I scarce can take it  
in,  
That on the cross my burden gladly  
bearing  
He bled and died to take away my  
sin,  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God,  
to thee,  
How great thou art! How great thou  
art!  
(*"How Great Thou Art"*)

### **Give thanks to God**

Brothers and sisters, on this Easter Sunday, let us give special thanks to God for the atonement and resurrection of his beloved Son, Jesus Christ. For in him, by him, and through him, this temporary mortal condition can be made into a permanent, perfect existence, for which words cannot express our joy.

To truly reverence the Creator, we must appreciate his creations. We need to plan to take time to observe the marvels of nature. Today, we can easily become surrounded by brick buildings and asphalt surfaces that shelter us from real life around us. Plan to share with your family the miracle of buds changing to fragrant blossoms. Take time to sit on a hillside and feel the tranquillity of the evening when the sun casts its last golden glow over the horizon. Take time to smell the roses.

All the marvels of nature are glimpses of his divine power and expressions of his love. Yet the greatest of all miracles awaits us. It will occur when, by his power, we will come forth from death and the grave to a new world that will not pass away, where, if we are worthy, we will be with him and our Father in Heaven forever and ever.



## Blessings of the Restoration

With humility but with firm conviction, we declare to all the world that we know for a surety that God the Father and Jesus Christ, his Son, live. We know that they visited the Prophet Joseph Smith in the spring of 1820. They spoke to Joseph and, through him, they revealed wonderful, true doctrines and restored the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ that had been lost from the world.

We invite all men and women everywhere to know of the restoration of the gospel, for in so doing they will develop a deep reverence and love for God, his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and their creations. I bear testimony that true reverence will bring peace, joy, and happiness to us all. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder Richard G. Scott

### How to be comforted by the Lord

It is Easter morning, that sacred season when the heart of each devout Christian turns in humble gratitude to our beloved Savior. It is a season that should bring peace and joy to all. Yet many of you have heavy hearts because a son or daughter, husband or wife, has turned from righteousness to pursue evil. My message is for you.

Your life is filled with anguish, pain, and, at times, despair. I will tell you how you can be comforted by the Lord.

First, you must recognize two foundation principles:

1. While there are many things you can do to help a loved one in need, there are some things that must be done by the Lord.

2. Also, no enduring improvement can occur without righteous exercise of agency. Do not attempt to override agency. The Lord himself would not do that. Forced obedience yields no blessings (see D&C 58:26–33).

I will suggest seven ways you can help.

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The choir sang “Come, We That Love the Lord” without announcement.

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### President Hinckley

We have just heard from Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. The choir then sang “Come, We That Love the Lord.”

The choir and congregation will now join in singing “The Lord Is My Shepherd,” following which we shall hear from Elder Richard G. Scott of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

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The choir and congregation sang “The Lord Is My Shepherd.”

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### Love, extend hope, and teach truth

First, love without limitations. When in a dream Lehi partook of the fruit of the tree of life and was filled with joy, his first thought was to share it with each member of his family, including the disobedient (see 1 Nephi 8:3–4, 12–18).

Second, do not condone the transgressions, but extend every hope and support to the transgressor. To his missionary son Corianton, who had violated the law of chastity, Alma said, “Behold, O my son, how great iniquity ye brought upon the Zoramites; for when they saw your conduct they would not believe in my words” (Alma 39:11). Then he clarified in careful detail principles which his son had improperly used to justify his acts. Subsequently, that loving father gave this counsel:

“O my son, I desire that ye should deny the justice of God no more. Do not endeavor to excuse yourself in the least point because of your sins, . . . but do you let the justice of God, and his mercy, and his long-suffering have full sway in your heart; and let it bring you down to the dust in humility.

“ . . . And now, my son, go thy way, declare the word with truth and soberness” (Alma 42:30–31). Corianton repented and became a powerful servant.

Third, teach truth. Nephi taught his brothers, “Whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and would hold fast unto it, they would never perish; neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them unto blindness, to lead them away to destruction” (1 Nephi 15:24).

Then he gave this example of how to teach: “I did exhort them with all the energies of my soul, and with all the faculty which I possessed, that they would give heed to the word of God and remember to keep his commandments always in all things” (v. 25).

### **Forgive, pray, and keep perspective**

Fourth, honestly forgive as often as is required. The Lord declared: “If he . . . repenteth in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also.

“ . . . And as often as my people repent will I forgive them” (Mosiah 26:29–30).

Fifth, pray trustingly. “The . . . fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).

The Master taught, “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you” (3 Nephi 18:20). “Pray always, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you, and great shall be your blessing” (D&C 19:38).

Sixth, keep perspective. When you have done all that you can reasonably do, rest the burden in the hands of the Lord.

When I take a small pebble and place it directly in front of my eye, it takes on the appearance of a mighty boulder. It is all I can see. It becomes all-consuming—like the problems of a loved one that affect our lives every waking moment. When the things you realistically can do to help are done, leave the matter in the hands of the Lord and worry no more. Do not feel guilty because you cannot do more. Do not waste your energy on use-

less worry. The Lord will take the pebble that fills your vision and cast it down among the challenges you will face in your eternal progress. It will then be seen in perspective. In time, you will feel impressions and know how to give further help. You will find more peace and happiness, will not neglect others that need you, and will be able to give greater help because of that eternal perspective.

Abraham labored that his own father would overcome transgression. Despite his best efforts, his father turned to idolatry. Had Abraham let that proper concern for a father consume his every thought, he could not have received this promise: “In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed” (3 Nephi 20:25).

Some who have overcome serious sin in their own lives blame themselves because of that prior disobedience when a loved one does not respond as desired. Such promptings come from Satan, not from the Lord. Alma could help his son Corianton because Alma spoke from a position of strength, knowing that his own sins had been entirely forgiven through repentance.

This is not a doctrinal discourse; rather, it is a personal witness of what I know to be true. At times my wife, Jeanene, and I have had challenges that seemed more difficult than we could possibly face alone. Once she lost a baby girl and nearly her life. Within six weeks, another beloved son was taken home. We pled for help, and it came.

When other challenges have brought us to our knees, we have had confidence that we would receive comfort and guidance, and they came. The Lord opens doors of opportunity and provides the strength each of us needs at difficult times in our life.

This Easter, as we remember the Resurrection and the price paid and the gift given through the Atonement, let us ponder what the scriptures teach of those sacred events. Our personal witness of their reality will be strengthened. They must be more than principles we memorize. They must be woven into the very fiber of our being as a bulwark in time of need.

Nephi taught: "For ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.

"Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life" (2 Nephi 31:19-20).

He could well have added, "and shall have peace and happiness now." Happiness comes from understanding and living the teachings of the Lord. It comes from not being critical of ourselves when we don't accomplish all we want to do.

### Never give up

*One last suggestion—Never give up on a loved one, never!*

I know we have a loving Father in Heaven. He asks us to worship him that we may feel his love. He entreats us to love his Son that we may be comforted and strengthened.

Sometimes, we foolishly recite facts about the Father and the Son, mechanically, and—forgive us—preach to them, preen before them, and display our

ignorance and pride. Yet they continue to love us perfectly, each one of us, individually. Yes, they are all-powerful and all-knowing; their works extend eternally, yet their love for each of us is personal, knowing, uncompromising, endless, perfect.

I know they live. I know that Jesus is the Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. I love him with all my soul. He gave his life that we might overcome errors to live eternally. I don't understand how he did it. In my own imperfect way, I try to imagine the incomprehensible burden he felt as he entered into the closing hours of his ministry on earth, knowing that his life had to be completely sinless, without error. He had to provide the perfect atonement for all mankind, each individual, without exception, or not one soul could ever return to the presence of God. He did it. He did it perfectly. Neither he nor his Father will ever fail us—never in all eternity. I bear that witness, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

We have just heard from Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

## Elder Marvin J. Ashton

### "What can I do while I am waiting?"

A few days ago a new friend, not now a member of the Church because of recent discipline, asked, "What can I do while I am waiting? Over the past period of time it has been made very evident what I cannot do. Tell me and others in my situation what we can do."

As I try to respond to this sincere plea from a good person, perhaps I am directing my suggestions only to a few, but they are a precious few. I would endeavor to instill hope instead of despair in

those who temporarily have lost certain powers and privileges. Some of these people in this category dare not hope anymore for fear of being disappointed. May they and their families be helped with thoughts that will bring action, comfort, and a new sense of self-worth.

I recall vividly and with feeling this friend's additional request, "Please don't tell me to be patient, loving, sweet, and understanding. I need more than that. I need solid direction. I have an urgent need to get over my frustrated feelings and get on with life. Please help me."

### **“Ye shall minister unto him”**

How can we as Church members best help these good people?

I suggest a quotation from the Book of Mormon as a foundation for our actions: “Nevertheless, ye shall not cast him out from among you, but ye shall minister unto him and shall pray for him unto the Father, in my name; and if it so be that he repenteth and is baptized in my name, then shall ye receive him, and shall minister unto him of my flesh and blood” (3 Nephi 18:30).

Often in the scriptures we are reminded that we should minister to all of God’s children, that we should do so with the pure love of God in our hearts. George Bernard Shaw once wrote, “The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them” (*The Devil’s Disciple*, act 2). Indifference can be one of the most hurtful ways of behavior. Never should we in life allow ourselves to turn away, walk on the other side of the street, and pretend we didn’t see, or prohibit involvement in accepted ways. We need to learn to love everyone, even those who are difficult.

A warm handshake and a friendly smile can be wonderfully healing medicine. Conversely, how unwise we are when we declare, “I’ll never speak to him again.” Never is a long time, and even those who have caused heartache or shame are not beyond ultimate repentance. Sometimes hurts to the heart are more damaging than physical blows. Yes, they may take longer to heal, but they will heal more quickly if we avoid bitterness and anger and practice forgiveness.

As we support the efforts of those who are trying to work through their challenges, we should be helpful, and will be if we can extend kindness, compassion, patience, and love. It is a sad day when any one of us surrenders to sin or circumstances.

Many of those “waiting” have often been hurt by thoughtless words and deeds of those around them. Blessed is he or she who avoids being offended. There are appropriate and acceptable assignments which can and should be given to those who are in this waiting period.

### **“Whosoever will come, him will I receive”**

Now as to the request of my friend, “What can I do while I’m waiting?” Also from 3 Nephi we are given this warm invitation:

“Yea, verily I say unto you, if ye will come unto me ye shall have eternal life. Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come, him will I receive; and blessed are those who come unto me” (3 Nephi 9:14).

This scripture indicates that in life there is no waiting period before we can come unto God. In our weakness we know where we can turn for strength. What good advice and wise direction for our lives can be gleaned through study of the scriptures! Self-esteem can be renewed and strength to do His will can be revived. People must always count more than programs.

As one comes unto Christ, he learns of the reality of forgiveness: “Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more.

“By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them” (D&C 58:42–43).

When a man is convinced of the truth of that scripture, “I, the Lord, remember them no more,” he is ready to start coming back to full fellowship. Some suggestions can be made using two effective words: *shun* and *participate*. *Shun* means to avoid deliberately and especially consistently, to abhor. To participate, one takes part or has a share in common with others.

### **Things to shun**

We would recommend that one should—

1. Shun feelings of resentment, bitterness, and contention toward individuals rendering decisions. When discipline is administered, there is a tendency on the part of some to become resentful toward the individuals and institutions who have had to make the judgment. We should

permit ourselves to take a self-inventory sampling before we "cast the first stone." Resentment and anger are not good for the soul. They are foul things.

Bitterness must be replaced with humility. Truly, bitterness injures the one who carries it. It blinds, shrivels, and cankers.

Some of us are inclined to look to the weaknesses and shortcomings of others in order to expand our own comfort zone. A worthy personal support system in cases like this must include, to be effective, family, friends, and acquaintances who are willing to help us cope with what we see and experience.

Moroni gave us all some words of advice. "Condemn me not because of mine imperfection, neither my father, because of his imperfection, neither them who have written before him; but rather give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been" (Mormon 9:31).

A repentant individual will choose his own course and proceed with confidence. He has no need to protect a wounded self. He will not allow himself the danger of self-inflicted sympathy. It is generally good medicine to sympathize with others, but not with yourself.

2. Shun discouragement. One of Satan's most powerful tools is discouragement. Whisperings of "you can't do it," "you're no good," "it's too late," "what's the use?" or "things are hopeless" are tools of destruction. Satan would like you to believe that because you've made one mistake it's all over. He wants you to quit trying. It is important that discouragement is cast out of the lives of those who are waiting. This may take a decided amount of work and energy, but it can be accomplished.

3. Shun escape routes. There are those who would welcome you into rebellious or apostate groups. We can never build with purpose if we join the ranks of those who criticize and aim to tear down.

It is easier to demean and place blame on others for our situation than it is to repent and grow. Some who set out to damage and destroy others end up losing themselves in the process. Drugs, drink,

pornographic materials, and subculture associations are also escape routes. Attitudes of "it won't matter now" or "there is nothing for you to do" are totally inappropriate. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). Maintaining and building require discipline and patience. Shun those who would build themselves by destroying others.

4. Shun the desire to become anonymous. When difficulties arise, some want to fade into the crowd and become lost and unknown. Any thinking person will realize that there is a wonderful support system available to those who are listed on the records of the Church. There are those who will listen, help, and teach. There will be opportunities to study scriptures, ponder, and pray. Caring people and a caring God want to know where you are.

All need to be known, recognized, and loved. Hearts and souls reach out for nurturing and meaningful association. Even those who claim they just want to be left alone are in reality seeking their own identity.

Some privileges and powers are lost when we lose our membership in the Church, but let us not lose ourselves in the process of finding ourselves again. In God's eyes, nobody is a nobody. We should never lose sight of what we may become and who we are.

## Ways to participate

While waiting, there are many ways to participate:

5. Participate with your family. Family members are priceless possessions. They offer love and strength. But even more, family members need each other. You can choose to be aware of the needs of each family member and do your part to help fill those needs. Some need a person to listen; some may need a compliment or positive reinforcement. There is strength and satisfaction in becoming involved in family projects. Encourage family love by being approachable even when you feel you have reason to turn

away. The first step back in seeking family acceptance is to change oneself for the better. It is true today, true yesterday, and will be true tomorrow that effective leadership can only be administered through love.

6. Participate in church functions and meetings. Accept opportunities to take appropriate assignments when given the opportunity. I will always be grateful to a good man who helped our boys on a continuing basis while it was not possible for him to take part in all the Church programs. He was well loved, and he loved the boys to whom he gave time and guidance.

Practice dependability and commitment. Adapt to existing conditions. There are places to serve where you are needed.

When someone declares, "There's nothing for me to do," it just isn't true. We sometimes make that statement because we have learned to live with present situations and resist new opportunities. Leaders must always be sensitive enough to look beyond restrictions and policies to the ultimate long-range needs of God's children.

7. Participate in worthy community projects, including compassionate and other volunteer services. Often our own problems seem to diminish when we become aware of the challenges faced by others. When my wife was volunteering as a pink lady at one of our local hospitals, she noticed that some of the doctors in the area would encourage their patients who were depressed, sad, or emotionally ill to join the volunteer organization. That prescription often worked better than medicine to build self-image and restore health to those who found joy in helping others.

As budget cuts plague so many of our cultural and civic programs, there is a place for anyone who desires to work with Scouts, help with reputable drives to collect money, and help in schools, art galleries, welfare agencies, and many other places.

There are no restrictions on participating in good works. There are no reasons to wait while God's children are in need of your love and service. Love should be a vehicle allowed to travel

without limitations. Jesus was always supremely interested in the individual over the circumstances.

8. Participate in "reporting in." Part of your responsibility in coming back is to find someone with whom you can share your concerns, questions, and progress. John Powell, in his book *The Secret of Staying in Love*, tells us that "the genius of communication is the ability to be both totally honest and totally kind at the same time" ([Valencia, California: Tabor Publishing, 1974], p. 131).

Look for this kind of person in your life. Problems often seem to diminish when they are vocalized. Another person's point of view may help you gain a different perspective of a situation. It is comforting to have a listener who will share your feelings and respect your needs.

Communication should be kind, gentle, open, and constructive.

One of the greatest blessings available to all is personal prayer. By this means everyone can "report in" to an understanding Father who loves all His children. God knows the feelings in every human heart. He can soften sorrow and lead when there seems to be no light. Prayer can give guidance and confidence. It reminds us that no one need be alone in this world. If all else fails, remember: God and one other person can be a family.

### A plea to come back

My plea and invitation to all, especially to those who have temporarily lost certain privileges, is come back. Your lives are as important to us as they should be to you. One of the main goals of the Church is to secure the development and happiness of the individual. We want to have your association and your influence. President David O. McKay once wrote:

"In thus emphasizing individual effort, I am not unmindful of the necessity of cooperation. A single, struggling individual may be stalled with his heavy load even as he begins to climb the hill before him. To reach the top unaided is an impossibility. With a little help from fellow travelers he makes the grade and goes on

his way in gratitude and rejoicing" (*Paths to Happiness*, comp. Llewelyn R. McKay [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1957], p. 131).

We want to be your fellow travelers while you are en route back. Anxiously engage in actions and attitudes that will bring full fellowship and the accompanying joys and rights to which you will be entitled. We will be at your side to help as you travel upward in a support system with God at the helm. We promise you in all the days ahead that while you are going through what is identified as a waiting period, the quotation from Psalm 142:4 will not be your relationship to us: "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul."

We love you. We know you, and we care for you. We are all God's children,

and for members in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and their treasured associates, there need be no waiting period. Instead we will work together for self-worth and ultimate victory in righteous achievement. To these truths I leave my witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The choir sang "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth" without announcement.

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### President Hinckley

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve has addressed us, and the choir has sung "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth."

## President Gordon B. Hinckley

I desire now to share a few thoughts on the eternal things of God, and I pray for His directing Spirit.

If I repeat one or two things that my brethren have said, it is because this is Easter morning, when we commemorate the greatest of all events in the history of mankind—the breaking of the bonds of death by Him who is the eternal Son of the living God.

### Memories of classmates

I have spoken at three different funerals of old friends in the past three weeks. I have had occasion to reflect on the fact and miracle of life, and the wonder and miracle of death.

Returning from a memorial service for a high school friend of long ago, I took from a shelf in my study the yearbook for the class of 1928. I spent an hour quietly thumbing through the pages of photographs of my associates in our graduating class of sixty years ago.

All of those faces were then young and bright and full of promise. I do not know what has become of all of them, but

I know what has become of many of them. We have followed a myriad of interests in pursuit of our dreams. Some perished with honor in the terrible wars that have scourged the earth during these threescore years. Most of us have married, happily I am glad to say, and have already become the forebears of three generations of posterity. I know of no divorces among that large number.

Once as lively students we shouted for victory for our basketball and football teams. Now, somewhat bent, we prefer to read and ponder and reflect. Once we danced and sang with noisy delight. We now enjoy peace and quiet and a comfortable chair. These of my peers have become educators, scientists, doctors, lawyers, civil servants, and have done well in many other honorable vocations. As I thumbed through the pages of that old book, I could not think of one who had been convicted of a serious crime. I think that remarkable. All who are alive are now in their late seventies. Many are gone, and we remember them with affection and appreciation.

In each case their passing has brought sorrow over the separation of friends. But in every case there have also been comfort and reassurance and certainty that death, though bitter to observe, is not the end, but is, rather, only another graduation from which we go on to a better life. For all of my classmates were of my faith, who believed as I believe. Along with English and chemistry, history and math, we were taught the things of God, just as hundreds of thousands of our youth today are taught through the great programs of the Church.

The other day as I stood at the bier of my classmate and reflected on the things of eternity, I had peace in my heart and gratitude. There were tears, yes, properly so. The Lord said: "Thou shalt live together in love, inasmuch that thou shalt weep for the loss of them that die, and more especially for those that have not hope of a glorious resurrection.

"And it shall come to pass that those that die in me shall not taste of death, for it shall be sweet unto them" (D&C 42:45-46).

I am confident that for the friend of my high school days, death was a sweet experience with the assurance of a glorious resurrection.

Now absent is the pain of mortal life. Gone is the suffering of long sickness and much of loneliness. She is again in the association of loved ones, the parents who gave her mortal life and others of her family who loved her while they lived. Her spirit has gone to join theirs, and there will come that promised morning of the first resurrection, when they shall again take up their bodies and live in that sociality which bound them with the bonds of love while they were mortal beings.

### The great promise of Easter

This is the great promise of Easter. How wonderful it is that this is a day of celebration throughout the Christian world. Of all the events of human history, none is so significant as the resurrection of the Son of God.

Since the creation of man, no fact of life has been so certain as death with the close of mortality. When the last of life's breath is drawn, there is a finality comparable to no other finality. When a father and mother lay the remains of a beloved child in the cold of the grave, there is grief almost inconsolable. When a husband buries the companion of his life, there is a loneliness that is poignant and unrelieved. When a wife closes the casket on the remains of her beloved husband, there are wounds that seem never to heal. When children are bereft of parents who loved and nurtured them, there is an abject destitution comparable to none other. Life is sacred, and death is somber. Life is buoyant and hopeful. Death is solemn and dark. It is awesome in its silence and certainty. Appropriately did Sir Walter Raleigh cry out, "O eloquent, just and mighty death" (Alfred Noyes, *Raleigh*, in Tom Peete Cross and Clement Tyson Goode, sel., *Heath Readings in the Literature of England* [Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1927], p. 1133).

But death is not final. Though it seems so when its dark shroud overshadows mortal life, to those who accept the Christ and His eternal mission there is light and comfort, there is assurance, there is certainty.

I penned these lines some years ago while seated in the funeral service of a friend:

What is this thing that men call  
death,  
This quiet passing in the night?  
'Tis not the end, but genesis  
Of better worlds and greater light.

O God, touch Thou my aching heart,  
And calm my troubled, haunting  
fears.  
Let hope and faith, transcendent,  
pure,  
Give strength and peace beyond my  
tears.

There is no death, but only change  
With recompense for victory won;  
The gift of Him who loved all men,  
The Son of God, the Holy One.



## The resurrection and the life

Of all the victories in human history, none is so great, none so universal in its effect, none so everlasting in its consequences as the victory of the crucified Lord who came forth in the Resurrection that first Easter morning.

We laud the captains and the kings, we praise the nations that are victorious against oppressors. We appropriately build monuments to remember their sacrifices and their triumphs over the forces of oppression. But great and important as are these achievements, none can compare with the victory of the lonely, pain-racked figure on Calvary's cross who triumphed over death and brought the gift of eternal life to all mankind.

He it was who answered Job's desperate question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14). And it was Job who prophetically declared concerning the resurrected Master:

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

"And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

"Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19:25-27).

At some time every one of us must face the question which Job faced, and because of the Atonement wrought by Jesus Christ we may answer it as Job answered it. How wondrous is the story of the great Creator, the mighty Jehovah, who condescended to come to earth as the babe born in Bethlehem of Judea, who walked the dusty paths of Palestine teaching and healing and blessing, who gave His life on Calvary's painful cross, and who rose from Joseph's tomb, appearing to many on two continents—the resurrected Lord of whom we read in the testament of the Old World, the Bible, and in the testament of the New World, the Book of Mormon, as well as in the sure word of modern revelation.

We have read these, and the Spirit has borne witness in our hearts so that

we too can testify that Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life, and that he that believeth in Him, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in Him shall never die (see John 11:25-26).

Gone is the sting of death. The grave is robbed of its victory.

## The master of life and death

He was the master of life and death, the man of miracles. It was He who made the blind to see, the lame to walk, the dead to live.

"There cometh [one day] one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw [Jesus], he fell at his feet,

"And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live. . . .

"While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?

"As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he sayeth unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe" (Mark 5:22-23, 35-36).

Then he took with him Peter, James, and John, and, dismissing those without faith, "he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.

"And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment" (vs. 41-42).

Small wonder that they were astonished with a great astonishment. None other in all of their acquaintance, nor in all of history, had done as He had done. He raised the damsel from death to life. And as it was with her, so it was and even more so with Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, who had been dead and entombed when the Master called him forth to life, and he came forth. Surely Jesus was the master of life and death, yet

He accepted the ignominy and the horrendous pain of the cross as cruel and barbarous men planned His death. As He hung in agony, His evil tormentors cried out, "He saved others; himself he cannot save" (Matthew 27:42).

He had the power to save Himself. To the impetuous Peter who had tried to defend Him against those who had come to arrest Him, He had said, "Think-est thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53).

So it might have been had He asked His Father. "But," said He, "how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Matthew 26:54).

### **He became our Redeemer**

No, the Son of Man must give His life to atone for the sins of all mankind, that He, being lifted up, might lift up all men after Him.

He submitted Himself, and they took Him and in mockery crowned Him with a crown of platted thorns and placed a purple robe on His back. Without mercy and with hatred vile and intemperate, they beat Him and scourged Him and cried out for His crucifixion. He had done no evil. He had done only good, and in greater measure than any man before Him had ever done. Yet they cried for His death.

He staggered under the weight of the cross on which He was to hang. They nailed His quivering flesh to the unyielding wood. They mocked Him as He hung in agony.

While suffering, He forgave them. He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). Then He died for each of us.

But in dying He brought about the redemption of mankind. None can fully comprehend the extent and wonder and majesty of that sacrifice in our behalf. Suffice it to say He became our Redeemer.

His body was dressed and placed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. The tomb was sealed, and guards were set.

### **The first fruits of them that slept**

But no force beneath the heavens could now hold back the power of the Son of God. It was as if His Almighty Father could stand no more. The earth trembled. The guards fled. The stone was moved. The Lord of heaven and earth arose from the bier, shook off the burial clothes, and stepped forth to become the first fruits of them that slept. The empty tomb bore testimony of this greatest of all miracles. With the appearance of the risen Lord first to Mary and then to many others, even to upwards of five hundred, came the undeniable testimony of His everlasting power over life and death.

Mary addressed Him as *Rabboni*, which means Master. The Apostles felt of His wounds, and Thomas, who had doubted, declared, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).

### **Book of Mormon witnesses of Christ**

Nor was the miracle witnessed only in Palestine. There were other sheep of His fold of whom He had spoken. He must visit them. All of this is set forth as the testimony of many witnesses in the four gospels of the New Testament. And there is a fifth which speaks with equal power as an added witness of His divinity and of the reality of His resurrection. It is found in this other testament which we call the Book of Mormon. It concerns events that occurred in this western hemisphere when the earth trembled at His dying. There was destruction and darkness and weeping and death.

And there gathered a multitude round about the temple in the land Bountiful who marveled at the great changes that had taken place and at the terrible destructions which they had witnessed. And "they heard a voice as if it came out of heaven; and they cast their eyes round about, for they understood not the voice which they heard; and it was not a harsh voice, neither was it a loud voice; nevertheless, and notwithstanding it being a small voice it did pierce them that did hear to the center, insomuch that there

was no part of their frame that it did not cause to quake; yea, it did pierce them to the very soul, and did cause their hearts to burn" (3 Nephi 11:3).

And the voice came again, and yet a third time, "and it said unto them:

"Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him.

"And . . . they saw a Man descending out of heaven; and he was clothed in a white robe; and he came down and stood in the midst of them; . . .

"And it came to pass that he stretched forth his hand and spake unto the people, saying:

"Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.

"And behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning" (3 Nephi 11:6–11).

They felt of His wounds, they cried out with love, and they fell at His feet and worshiped Him.

At that time and during the days that followed He taught them as He had taught in Palestine. He instituted the sacrament of the Last Supper among them that they and the generations who followed might hold Him in remembrance. He blessed them, and when He departed from them the Holy Ghost came upon them.

### **Latter-day witnesses of Christ**

He has come again in this period of history. In a manifestation without

comparison, our Eternal Father and the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ appeared to open this "the dispensation of the fullness of times" (D&C 112:30). He to whom they appeared became the prophet of this dispensation. And it was he who declared:

"And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

"For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

"That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God" (D&C 76:22–24).

To which we add our solemn testimony this Easter Sabbath. We too know, by the power of the Holy Ghost which has borne witness to us, that He is the living Son of the living God.

He is our Savior, our Redeemer, the Prince of Peace, the Prince of Life, the Son of the Everlasting Father, the Hope of all mankind, of which I bear witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir will sing, in closing, "Father in Heaven, We Do Believe," following which the benediction will be offered by Elder George I. Cannon of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and we shall be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

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The choir sang "Father in Heaven, We Do Believe."

Elder George I. Cannon offered the benediction.

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## **SECOND DAY AFTERNOON SESSION**

The fifth session of the 158th Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 3, 1988. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir, directed by Jerold Ottley and Donald H. Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Monson made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting.

### **President Thomas S. Monson**

President Ezra Taft Benson, who has presided at all sessions of this conference, has asked that I, Brother Monson, conduct this fifth and concluding session of the 158th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled in the Tabernacle and to those seated in the Assembly Hall, where Elders Rex D. Pinegar and Ronald E. Poelman are seated on the stand. We also send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, with Jerold D. Ottley and Donald H. Ripplinger directing and Robert Cundick at the organ, will begin this service by singing "Praise the Lord with Heart and Voice." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Robert L. Simpson of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

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The choir sang "Praise the Lord with Heart and Voice."

Elder Robert L. Simpson offered the invocation.

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### **President Monson**

This magnificent choir will now sing the beautiful number entitled "Praise," and following the singing, Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our first speaker.

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The choir sang "Praise."

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## **Elder Boyd K. Packer**

### **The Lord's atonement**

The Lord had come from Gethsemane; before Him was His crucifixion. At the moment of betrayal, Peter drew his sword against Malchus, a servant of the high priest. Jesus said:

"Put up again thy sword into his place. . . .

"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:52-53).

During all of the taunting, the abuse, the scourging, and the final torture of crucifixion, the Lord remained silent and submissive. Except, that is, for one moment of intense drama which reveals the very essence of Christian doctrine.

That moment came during the trial. Pilate, now afraid, said to Jesus: "Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not

that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" (John 19:10).

One can only imagine the quiet majesty when the Lord spoke. "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19:11).

What happened thereafter did not come because Pilate had power to impose it, but because the Lord had the will to accept it.

"I lay down my life," the Lord said, "that I might take it again.

"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:17-18).

Before the Crucifixion and afterward, many men have willingly given their lives in selfless acts of heroism. But none faced what the Christ endured.

Upon Him was the burden of all human transgression, all human guilt.

And hanging in the balance was the Atonement. Through His willing act, mercy and justice could be reconciled, eternal law sustained, and that mediation achieved without which mortal man could not be redeemed.

He, by choice, accepted the penalty for all mankind for the sum total of all wickedness and depravity; for brutality, immorality, perversion, and corruption; for addiction; for the killings and torture and terror—for all of it that ever had been or all that ever would be enacted upon this earth.

In choosing, He faced the awesome power of the evil one who was not confined to flesh nor subject to mortal pain. That was Gethsemane!

How the Atonement was wrought, we do not know. No mortal watched as evil turned away and hid in shame before the light of that pure being.

All wickedness could not quench that light. When what was done was done, the ransom had been paid. Both death and hell forsook their claim on all who would repent. Men at last were free. Then every soul who ever lived could choose to touch that light and be redeemed.

By this infinite sacrifice, through this atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.

### The word *atonement* in the Bible

*Atonement* is really three words: *At-one-ment*, meaning to set at one, one with God; to reconcile, to conciliate, to expiate.

But did you know that the word *atonement* appears only once in the English New Testament? Only once! I quote from Paul's letter to the Romans:

"Christ died for us. . . .

" . . . We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

"And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the

*atonement*" (Romans 5:8, 10–11; italics added).

Only that once does the word *atonement* appear in the English New Testament. *Atonement*, of all words! It was not an unknown word, for it had been used much in the Old Testament in connection with the law of Moses, once only in the New Testament. I find that to be remarkable.

I know of only one explanation. For that we turn to the Book of Mormon.

Nephi testified that the Bible once "contained the fulness of the gospel of the Lord, of whom the twelve apostles bear record" (1 Nephi 13:24) and that "after [the words] go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the formation of that great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away" (1 Nephi 13:26).

Jacob defined the great and abominable church in these words:

"Wherefore, he that fighteth against Zion, both Jew and Gentile, both bond and free, both male and female, shall perish; for they are they who are the whore of all the earth; for they who are not for me are against me, saith our God" (2 Nephi 10:16).

Nephi said, "Because of the many plain and precious things which have been taken out of the book, . . . an exceedingly great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them" (1 Nephi 13:29). He then prophesied that the precious things would be restored (see 1 Nephi 13:34–35).

### The word *atonement* in latter-day scripture

And they were restored. In the Book of Mormon the word *atone* in form and tense appears fifty-five times. I quote but one verse from Alma: "And now, the plan of mercy could not be brought about except an *atonement* should be made;

therefore God himself *atoneth* for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of mercy, to appease the demands of justice, that God might be a perfect, just God, and a merciful God also" (Alma 42:15; italics added).

Only once in the New Testament—fifty-five times in the Book of Mormon. What better witness that the Book of Mormon is indeed another testament of Jesus Christ?

And that is not all. The words *atone*, *atonement*, *atoneth*, appear in the Doctrine and Covenants eleven times and in the Pearl of Great Price three. Sixty-nine references of transcendent importance. And that is not all! Hundreds of other verses help to explain it.

### Agency in the Fall and Atonement

The cost of the Atonement was borne by the Lord without compulsion, for agency is a sovereign principle. According to the plan, agency must be honored. It was so from the beginning, from Eden.

"The Lord said unto Enoch: Behold these thy brethren; they are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their knowledge, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency" (Moses 7:32).

Whatever else happened in Eden, in his supreme moment of testing, Adam made a choice.

After the Lord commanded Adam and Eve to multiply and replenish the earth and commanded them *not* to partake of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, He said, "Nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but, remember that I forbid it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Moses 3:17).

There was too much at issue to introduce man into mortality by force. That would contravene the very law essential to the plan. The plan provided that each spirit child of God would receive a mortal body and each would be tested. Adam saw that it must be so and made his choice. "Adam fell that men might be;

and men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25).

### The Fall and Atonement were essential

Adam and Eve ventured forth to multiply and replenish the earth as they had been commanded to do. The creation of their bodies in the image of God, as a separate creation, was crucial to the plan. Their subsequent fall was essential if the condition of mortality was to exist and the plan proceed.

Jacob described what would happen to our bodies and our spirits except an atonement, an infinite atonement, were made. We should, he said, have become "like unto [the devil]" (see 2 Nephi 9:7-9).

I seldom use the word *absolute*. It seldom fits. I use it now—twice. Because of the Fall, the Atonement was absolutely essential for resurrection to proceed and overcome mortal death.

The Atonement was absolutely essential for men to cleanse themselves from sin and overcome the second death, which is the spiritual death, which is separation from our Father in Heaven. For the scriptures tell us, seven times they tell us, that no unclean thing may enter the presence of God.

Those scriptural words, "Thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee" (Moses 3:17), introduced Adam and Eve and their posterity to all the risks of mortality. In mortality men are free to choose, and each choice begets a consequence. The choice Adam made energized the law of justice, which required that the penalty for disobedience would be death.

But those words spoken at the trial, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19:11), proved mercy was of equal rank. A Redeemer was sent to pay the debt and set men free. That was the plan.

Alma's son Corianton thought it unfair that penalties must follow sin, that there need be punishment. In a profound lesson Alma taught the plan of redemption to his son, and so to us.

Alma spoke of the Atonement and said, "Now, repentance could not come unto men except there were a punishment" (Alma 42:16).

If punishment is the price repentance asks, it comes at bargain price. Consequences, even painful ones, protect us. So simple a thing as a child's cry of pain when his finger touches fire can teach us that. Except for the pain, the child might be consumed.

I readily confess that I would find no peace, neither happiness nor safety, in a world without repentance. I do not know what I should do if there were no way for me to erase my mistakes. The agony would be more than I could bear. It may be otherwise with you, but not with me.

An atonement was made. Ever and always it offers amnesty from transgression and from death if we will but repent. Repentance is the escape clause in it all. Repentance is the key with which we can unlock the prison from inside. We hold that key within our hands, and agency is ours to use it.

How supernally precious freedom is; how consummately valuable is the agency of man.

Lucifer in clever ways manipulates our choices, deceiving us about sin and consequences. He, and his angels with him, tempt us to be unworthy, even wicked. But he cannot, in all eternity he cannot, with all his power he cannot completely destroy us; not without our own consent. Had agency come to man without the Atonement, it would have been a fatal gift.

### **God created man in His own image**

We are taught in Genesis, in Moses, in Abraham, in the Book of Mormon, and in the endowment that man's mortal body was made in the image of God in a separate creation. Had the Creation come in a different way, there could have been no Fall.

If men were merely animals, then logic favors freedom without accountability.

How well I know that among learned men are those who look down at animals

and stones to find the origin of man. They do not look inside themselves to find the spirit there. They train themselves to measure things by time, by thousands and by millions, and say these animals called men all came by chance. And this they are free to do, for agency is theirs.

But agency is ours as well. We look up, and in the universe we see the handiwork of God and measure things by epochs, by eons, by dispensations, by eternities. The many things we do not know we take on faith.

But this we know! It was all planned before the world was. Events from the Creation to the final, winding-up scene are not based on *chance*; they are based on *choice*! It was planned that way.

This we know! This simple truth! Had there been no Creation, no Fall, there should have been no need for any Atonement, neither a Redeemer to mediate for us. Then Christ need not have been.

### **The Passover: a symbol and a type**

At Gethsemane and Golgotha the Savior's blood was shed. Centuries earlier the Passover had been introduced as a symbol and a type of things to come. It was an ordinance to be kept forever (see Exodus 12).

When the plague of death was decreed upon Egypt, each Israelite family was commanded to take a lamb, firstborn, male, without blemish. This paschal lamb was slain without breaking any bones, its blood to mark the doorway of the home. The Lord promised that the angel of death would *pass over* the homes so marked and not slay those inside. They were saved by the blood of the lamb.

After the crucifixion of the Lord, the law of sacrifice required no more shedding of blood. For that was done, as Paul taught the Hebrews, "once for all, . . . one sacrifice for sins for ever" (Hebrews 10:10, 12). The sacrifice thenceforth was to be a broken heart and a contrite spirit—repentance.

And the Passover would be commemorated forever as the sacrament, in which we renew our covenant of baptism and partake in remembrance of the body

of the Lamb of God and of His blood, which was shed for us.

It is no small thing that this symbol reappears in the Word of Wisdom. Beyond the promise that Saints in this generation, who obey, will receive health and great treasures of knowledge is this: "I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them" (D&C 89:21).

### He ransomed us

I cannot with composure tell you how I feel about the Atonement. It touches the deepest emotion of gratitude and obligation. My soul reaches after Him who wrought it, this Christ, our Savior of whom I am a witness. I testify

of Him. He is our Lord, our Redeemer, our advocate with the Father. He ransomed us with His blood.

Humbly I lay claim upon the atonement of Christ. I find no shame in kneeling down in worship of our Father and His Son. For *agency* is mine, and this I *choose* to do!

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Monson

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elders George R. Hill III and John R. Lasater, who were sustained as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy at April conference last year.

## Elder George R. Hill III

### Science and religion complementary

My beloved fellow servants of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, since receiving this special call to full-time service for the Master, I have studied and pondered and prayed, as do all of you, to determine how best to serve.

It has been my privilege during the forty years prior to last April conference to search for truth through research in the physical sciences, an endeavor which blends some inspiration with a lot of perspiration, but which leads to the discovery of facts and principles which bring much benefit to mankind. I am most grateful for that privilege, as well as for the simultaneous privilege of discovering the principles of truth revealed directly from the Lord to his chosen prophets, as recorded in the scriptures. To the many young people of the Church who have the privilege of discovering truth through the scientific method, let me add my testimony to those of Elders James E. Talmage and John A. Widtsoe (author of a choice book, *In Search of Truth*) that there is no conflict between the facts and

truths of science and those given to us by direct revelation. Rather than conflicting, the facts and truths in each area complement each other, each supplying answers to basic questions which we must know, eventually, if we are to fulfill our destiny as sons and daughters and copartners with our Father in his eternal plan.

Apparent conflicts arise when the theories of science—which serve as a scaffolding erected to try to understand relationships among observed facts—are mistaken for the experimentally verified facts.

Occasionally also, some people subject the scriptures to personal interpretation. This can give rise to differences in perception as well. I have learned to say, "I don't know," when confronted with choices which seem to be in conflict. No true scientist will say that we have final, exact answers through scientific research; it is an ongoing, learning process. The Articles of Faith teach us that the Lord "will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" (Articles of Faith 1:9). As members of the Lord's church our blessing is to



believe all that is true and to diligently seek learning "by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118).

### Search scriptures for solutions

In our assignment in the Philippines, we have found it necessary to go to the scriptures for solutions to the challenges accompanying the wonderfully high conversion rate of a very spiritually sensitive people who need guidance in Church administrative procedures.

This is occurring in a land with an extremely high unemployment rate. We find food and materials shortages which remind us of the conditions that must have followed the destruction of the Nephite cities at the time of the Savior's crucifixion. At that time, the resurrected Savior gave the surviving Nephites some direction they needed to reestablish their civilization. He quoted His own words to Malachi of the need for their being faithful in their tithes and offerings:

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say: Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. . . .

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house; and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. . . .

"And all nations shall call you blessed, for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of Hosts" (3 Nephi 24:8, 10, 12).

The marvelous fulfillment of that promise within three years is described in 4 Nephi 1:2-5.

The members of the Church in the Philippines are becoming aware that sacrifice precedes the blessing and that they must live the law of tithing and the law of the fast if they are to receive the promises given those who do, as described in Isaiah 58:

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free? . . .

"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? . . .

"Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily. . . .

"Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. . . .

"And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (vs. 6-9, 11).

Mosiah 4:26 reinforces this counsel.

### Retain, reactivate, and record

We are finding it very important to follow the advice given by the First Presidency—to get back to basics and to practice the new version of the three *R*'s. Because the flood of new members exceeds the normal friendshipship capacity in wards and branches, our perceptive mission presidents and stake presidents are cooperating in the "Retaining and Re-activating, by Recording the participation and growth in Church service" of each current member and recent convert to the Church. The marked increase in continuing activity of new members is most encouraging and satisfying.

### Meeting the need for leaders

The need for leaders who understand the principles of the gospel and who can carry out the detailed administrative responsibilities in their new callings, while ministering to the individual, reminds us of the challenges faced by the Prophet Joseph in the Kirtland era of the early Church. Then, as now, there was a need for intense instruction in the Lord's way of doing things. The Lord's direction then was to institute the "school of the prophets, established for their instruction in all things that are expedient for them, even for all the officers of the church, . . . even down to the deacons" (D&C 88:127). The stake priesthood

leadership meeting provides a forum for the pretraining of potential leaders, to supplement the learning-by-observing method followed in established areas of the Church. What a blessing it is to be able to go to the scriptures to find the answers to virtually any challenge we face in our Church callings.

Let me close by expressing my love and gratitude for goodly parents, to my

choice wife and companion, and to our children and grandchildren, who sustain us so well with their prayers and the lives they lead. To them and to you I testify that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true, that Jesus lives and loves each of us with an unbounded love, and that Ezra Taft Benson is His chosen prophet today, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder John R. Lasater

I am aware, more than at any other time in my life, of the great responsibility that rests on the shoulders of those who carry out assignments at this pulpit. Nevertheless, I rejoice in the blessing and opportunity that is now mine to add my personal witness regarding the divinity of this great work to which we have been called.

### Example of the Master Shepherd

The personal nature of the Lord's ministry as the Master Shepherd should be the pattern for all who shepherd the flocks of Israel. The depth of His love, His willingness to give freely of Himself, His undeviating loyalty and devotion to the cause shared so completely with His Father, and His constant attention to the needs of the one stand as hallmarks of the true shepherd's calling.

### A shepherd in Morocco

Some years ago, it was my privilege to visit the country of Morocco as part of an official United States government delegation. As part of that visit, we were invited to travel some distance into the desert to visit some ruins. Five large black limousines moved across the beautiful Moroccan countryside at considerable speed. I was riding in the third limousine, which had lagged some distance behind the second. As we topped the brow of a hill, we noticed that the limousine in front of us had pulled off to

the side of the road. As we drew nearer, I sensed that an accident had occurred and suggested to my driver that we stop. The scene before us has remained with me for these many years.

An old shepherd, in the long, flowing robes of the Savior's day, was standing near the limousine in conversation with the driver. Nearby, I noted a small flock of sheep numbering not more than fifteen or twenty. An accident had occurred. The king's vehicle had struck and injured one of the sheep belonging to the old shepherd. The driver of the vehicle was explaining to him the law of the land. Because the king's vehicle had injured one of the sheep belonging to the old shepherd, he was now entitled to one hundred times its value at maturity. However, under the same law, the injured sheep must be slain and the meat divided among the people. My interpreter hastily added, "But the old shepherd will not accept the money. They never do."

Startled, I asked him why. And he added, "Because of the love he has for each of his sheep." It was then that I noticed the old shepherd reach down, lift the injured lamb in his arms, and place it in a large pouch on the front of his robe. He kept stroking its head, repeating the same word over and over again. When I asked the meaning of the word, I was informed, "Oh, he is calling it by name. All of his sheep have a name, for he is their shepherd, and the good shepherds know each one of their sheep by name."

It was as my driver predicted. The money was refused, and the old shepherd with his small flock of sheep, with the injured one tucked safely in the pouch on his robe, disappeared into the beautiful deserts of Morocco.

### **The shepherd's call is personal**

As we continued our journey toward the ruins, my interpreter shared with me more of the traditions and practices of the shepherds of that land. Each evening at sundown, for example, the shepherds bring their small flocks of sheep to a common enclosure where they are secured against the wolves that roam the deserts of Morocco. A single shepherd then is employed to guard the gate until morning. Then the shepherds come to the enclosure one by one, enter therein, and call forth their sheep—by name. The sheep will not hearken unto the voice of a stranger but will leave the enclosure only in the care of their true shepherd, confident and secure because the shepherd knows their names and they know his voice.

The words of the Master Shepherd rang loudly in my ears:

"But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

"To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

"And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

"And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers" (John 10:2-5).

### **Become true shepherds**

My dear brothers and sisters, there are great lessons to be learned from these stirring words of the Master Shepherd. Into our hands, as members of this great church, has been given responsibility to be the true shepherds unto the flocks of Israel. Do we understand the personal nature of the shepherd's call? Whether we

go as home teachers or visiting teachers, whether we serve as auxiliary leaders or teachers, or priesthood leaders at whatever level, we have received a divine injunction from God, through a living prophet, to become personal shepherds and ministers. No, it is not a new call; it has always been so.

Do we know our sheep, each one, by name? Do they know our voice, or must they hearken unto the voices of strangers? Do they know us as true shepherds who love them, who willingly and freely give time and attention to their needs, and, in that marvelous process, instill the confidence and security so greatly needed in God's children today? Are we then able to lead them into full activity in the Church and onward to immortality and eternal life? Do we go before them, constantly reassuring and building confidence because they know our voice?

Or are we strangers unto many? I promise you that you will not be a stranger, that you cannot be if you come to know the voice of the Master Shepherd, for that voice will confirm what a prophet has declared, and the Spirit will direct your efforts. And then, and only then, you will become a true shepherd in Israel.

There can be no greater example of the very personal nature of a true shepherd's call than the events of that Easter weekend nearly two thousand years ago—the depth of the Master Shepherd's love, His willingness to give freely of Himself, His undeviating loyalty and devotion to the cause, and His constant attention to the needs of the one. Those same qualities must mark our ministries as the shepherds of Israel.

I testify, with all the fervency of my soul, regarding the need we have to be true shepherds and to come to know the personal nature of the true shepherd's call. As one of His shepherds, I bear witness of the sacred responsibility that has been placed on our shoulders to be true shepherds unto the flocks of Israel and to know the personal nature of that calling. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## President Monson

Elders George R. Hill III and John R. Lasater of the First Quorum of the Seventy have just addressed us.

It will now be our privilege to listen to Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and currently serving as president of the Hawaii Honolulu Mission.

## Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi

My dear brothers and sisters, I bring greetings from the Saints and missionaries in the beautiful islands of Hawaii. I say to you, aloha!

Today, I would like to ask a question: My dear brothers, are we treating our wives as daughters of God? Are *you* treating *your* wife as a daughter of God?

*A daughter of God.* The words have a special feeling. Even as you say them, you feel a reverence. You may say, "Oh, Brother Kikuchi, of course I treat her as a daughter of God!" But my next question is, How *much* do you treat and honor her as a daughter of God? Let's stop and think of your lovely companion. She was entrusted to you by Heavenly Father as a special daughter of God.

I believe that in this lifetime, the closest person or neighbor that you can have in your life is your sweet wife. She is your sweetheart! She is your love! She is your best friend! She is your lover! And she is a daughter of God!

### Love thy wife

The Lord's teaching to the lawyer was very clear:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is *like unto it*, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39; italics added).

Yesterday, our beloved prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, said that above everything we do in our lives, we must place the first commandment first—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God."

The second is also like the first. The Lord said, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." Brothers, among all the children of our Father in Heaven, don't you think your wife is the closest neighbor that you can have?

The Lord said, "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart" (D&C 42:22).

Truly, "marriage is ordained of God" (D&C 49:15). "Marriage is honorable in all" (Hebrews 13:4).

### Abraham's commitment

When the Lord told Abraham to offer his only son, Isaac, on Mount Moriah, Abraham took Isaac, two servants, and a donkey and built an altar (see Genesis 22:2-3). On the way, Isaac asked, "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Though Father Abraham knew that Isaac was the one, he said, "My son, God will provide" (vs. 7-8).

When the time came, Abraham was willing to offer Isaac, and Isaac did not run away (see vs. 9-11). Brothers and sisters, in our marriages, we need both the commitment of Abraham and also the spirit of Isaac.

### Behold thy mother

At the time of his unendurable agony, the Savior looked down on his mother, Mary, and introduced John to her, saying, "Woman, behold thy son!" And to John he said, "Behold thy mother!" The scripture records that John "took her unto his own home" (John 19:26-27).

Are we worthy to be entrusted by the Lord to take care of one of our Heavenly Father's daughters?

The Savior must have a special feeling toward the women of the world, because the first person that saw the resurrected Lord was a woman, Mary Magdalene. Oh, how special that was! (See John 20.)

### Jonathon H. Napela

May I share today a story about a person who lived in such a way, *in an eternal*, loving companionship in Hawaii.

In 1850, Brigham Young sent ten missionaries to the Hawaiian Islands. Without understanding the language and culture, the missionaries found the work extremely difficult. Eventually they became discouraged, including the mission president. They became so discouraged that five of the ten left to go home. The youngest of the remaining missionaries, Elder George Q. Cannon, was determined to stay. He went to the Lord in prayer. The Lord inspired him to go to Lahaina on Maui. He did so.

As he approached this town, two ladies went screaming into a nearby house and brought out a local gentleman. The previous night, this man had had a dream that a messenger of God was coming to his town and that he must feed him. Elder Cannon was invited to stay and preach in the home of this man, Jonathon H. Napela, who was a very well-educated man and the magistrate of that district (see Alma 10:4).

Subsequently, Elder Cannon and Jonathon Napela became very close friends, like Alma and Amulek in the Book of Mormon (see Alma 10–15). Because of the guiding hand of God and Brother Napela's great help, along with the hospitality and kindness of the Hawaiian Saints, the missionary work began to excel in Hawaii, and the foundation was laid.

### His great and deep love

Many years later, in 1873, Kitty, the wife of this great man, Jonathon Napela, contracted leprosy. She was a beautiful and noble woman in the early days of the

Church in Hawaii. Today modern medical knowledge has advanced so that this disease is no longer fatal, but at that time, there was no cure for this dreadful disease. In order to prevent the spreading of this disease, once you contracted it you were forced to live on one of the seashores in the leper colony on Molokai. The lepers were taken there by boat. The sailors were so afraid of this disease that they pushed the patients into the sea, forcing them to swim to shore.

Because his wife had to go to Kalaupapa, the leper colony, Jonathon, too, wanted to go. He took her hand and they went there together. Why would he do this? Because he loved her so much! He knew that life is eternal and love is eternal, even through days of "sickness and health."

Oh, how much do I love my wife? Oh, do I love her as a daughter of God, as Jonathon loved his wife? Would I be willing to go to a place like that to be with her? Would you be willing to demonstrate your pure love like Jonathon? Brethren, are we honoring our companions? Are we caring? Are we thoughtful? We must be, because God has joined us together (see Mark 10:9).

History records that this valiant and giant man of God worked in the leper colony and fought to obtain government assistance for the lepers to have a more comfortable place to live. He was a giant in the pure love of Christ for his own people. Oh, I can almost hear the words of Paul to the Corinthians when he said, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (1 Corinthians 13:1).

This good brother later contracted that same disease and died even before his wife passed away. She followed him two years later. Husbands, do you love your wife as a daughter of God? Oh, "husbands, love your wives" as daughters of God, "even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).

I know that God lives! This is his church. I know that the Savior lives!

I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, who restored this church. I know that our beloved prophet, even President Ezra Taft Benson, is the living oracle of God and an example to us. The Book of Mormon is true. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Monson

We have just heard a beautiful message from Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, a member of the First Quorum of the

Seventy and currently the president of the Hawaii Honolulu Mission.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "I Know That My Redeemer Lives," following which Sister Dwan J. Young, who was released yesterday as general president of the Primary, will speak to us.

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The choir and congregation sang "I Know That My Redeemer Lives."

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## Dwan J. Young

### Strong and valiant children

Holly loved the towering pine tree in front of her home. Its branches shaded her favorite place to play.

The day of the accident, there were three younger children listening to Holly read under the tree. Suddenly, in her mind, something whispered to her. Holly's heart started to thump as the command echoed in her head, "Move!" She responded at once. Scrambling to her feet, she shouted to the children to run. She grabbed the smallest one, and the rest followed. The children thought it was a game until they heard a terrible crash.

A driver had lost control of his car and hit the big pine tree where the children had been reading only minutes before. They would have been badly hurt if they hadn't moved. Some of the children were so frightened that they started to cry. But not Holly. She was thinking about the small voice she had heard in her mind and heart that told her to move. She knew that the warning had come to her from the Holy Ghost. The gift that she had received from Heavenly Father after she had been baptized and confirmed had helped her, just as she had been promised. (See Elaine Cannon, *Baptized and Confirmed: Your Lifeline to Heaven* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1986], pp. 36-37.)

Now, there are many Hollies among us—children who have been taught to be

sensitive to the Spirit. Who are these children? Our beloved President Benson told us not long ago, "God has saved for the final inning some of His stronger and most valiant children, who will help bear off the kingdom triumphantly" (*Ensign*, Apr. 1987, p. 73). They are all sons and daughters of God, each with a special mission to perform. Their self-esteem grows as they learn who they truly are.

### A challenging environment

But many of our children today are learning under less than ideal circumstances. Even in elementary schools, some of the children are confronted with drugs, alcohol, profane language, and even immorality among their classmates. In many cases, family members are involved in so many activities away from home that there is no time for parents and children to develop meaningful relationships with one another. Fewer families are praying together and eating their meals together. Fewer fathers are spending time with their children, and more mothers are too tired at the end of the day to share an hour of reading or visiting with their children. Time that could be spent with family members is often spent watching television. By the age of eighteen, a child has typically spent more time in front of the television set than in school.

## Importance of teaching children

In this kind of an environment, we *must* take time to teach the children about the important things of life—about Heavenly Father, the Savior, and the Holy Ghost. We must teach them about repentance, baptism, honesty, and doing good to others. Now, you might say, “I’m not a parent; I don’t teach children.” Actually, we are all teachers of children—parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, priesthood leaders, ward members, neighbors. Children are always watching and learning. We teach them through our behavior as well as by what we say. They watch how we treat each other. They listen to the voices of their parents and to the voices at church. Unfortunately, they also listen to voices on television and elsewhere which sometimes teach values contrary to gospel principles. We must teach them at an early age to listen to the right voices, as Holly did.

## Five truths about children

Over the years, I’ve learned certain truths about children I’d like to share with you.

*First*, children *want* to be taught. This was brought home to me when I was visiting a Primary in Bolivia. I planned to visit an older class when three little girls tugged at my sleeve. They had been to their classroom but they came back because there was no teacher. “Please, will you teach us?” they asked. “We need a teacher.” This was one of the sweetest teaching experiences I have ever had because those children were thirsty for gospel truths.

*Second*, children understand quiet whisperings of the Spirit as Holly understood.

*Third*, as children learn, they can have a great influence for good. One young girl was taught a lesson about temples and eternal families. She went home and asked her father what would happen to her, because her family wasn’t sealed. Would she be given to another family? The faith of this tender soul touched her father and moved him to

action. Within a year their family was sealed in the temple.

*Fourth*, parents are commanded to teach their children gospel principles. In Doctrine and Covenants 68:25, the Lord instructs parents to teach their children “the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands.”

The Savior also teaches parents something more—that they should be as teachable as their children. He said, “Teach parents that they must repent and be baptized, and humble themselves as their little children, and they shall all be saved with their little children” (Moroni 8:10).

*Fifth*, gospel truths make a difference in the lives of children. Over the past few years, I’ve seen countless examples of children who have been taught gospel principles. When they learn these truths, they build a reservoir of strength to draw from throughout their lives. Let me share two examples with you.

Eight-year-old Annie spent a night at her friend’s house. When they finally settled down, their conversation turned to serious things. Were the scriptures true? They each asked Heavenly Father in their prayers and felt a strong witness from the Spirit that, yes, the scriptures are true. The next day Annie told her mother about that witness of the Spirit and made a commitment to start regular scripture study.

Now, like most eleven-year-old boys, Steven loved basketball. One afternoon he went with his friends to watch a game on television. Thirty minutes later, he returned home. His mother was surprised because she knew the game wasn’t over. When she questioned Steven, he said the boys had decided to watch a different program, but the program made him feel dark inside. That feeling had helped Steven recognize he was in a setting where the Spirit could not be present, and he was too uncomfortable to stay.

Although it is our responsibility to teach the children, they often teach us.

I shall be eternally grateful for my Primary experience and for all that the children have taught me.

I am also grateful for loving parents and dedicated Primary leaders, including those who have served by my side, who faithfully teach eternal principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ to our children. May each of us recognize the importance of teaching children.

On this beautiful Easter Sunday I bear witness that Jesus Christ lived and died for us, and that he lives again. He is my Savior, my example, my friend, and I love him. I pledge my continued devotion and service to him, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

My beloved brethren and sisters, I pray for that same spirit that we've enjoyed so much during this most beautiful and inspirational conference.

### Seeking Jesus Christ

Early in his mortal ministry, the Savior soon had a multitude of disciples drawn to him by the power of his presence and the spirit of his message. From among these disciples, he chose twelve to be his special witnesses. "And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles" (Luke 6:13).

Clearly, Jesus had chosen them; he said, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you" (John 15:16). These twelve were common men from various walks of life. The Savior selected them because he could see far beyond their earthly appearance and look into their hearts, recognizing their potential.

After the Savior called Peter, Andrew, and Philip, Philip introduced Jesus to Nathanael, whom some scholars believe to be Bartholomew, the Apostle. Philip said to Nathanael, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (John 1:45). In this statement, Philip testified that Jesus is the Messiah. Nathanael wondered whether

### President Monson

Sister Dwan J. Young, former president of the Primary, has just spoken to us. What an outstanding service Sister Young and her counselors, Sister Cannon and Sister Grassli, have rendered the Primary these last eight years. She will accompany her husband, Thomas Young, who has been called to preside over the Canada Calgary Mission this coming July.

It will now be our privilege to hear from Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

any good thing could come out of Nazareth, indicating the relatively bad reputation of Nazareth in those days. Philip asked him to come and see. This is the perfect answer to all who seek to know the truth about Christ. Impartial investigators are converted when they come and see.

### The guileless Nathanael

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he exclaimed of Nathanael, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" (John 1:47). At that moment, Nathanael recognized that Jesus could see into his heart and asked, in surprise, "Whence knowest thou me?" (v. 48). The Savior's reply demonstrated an even greater power of perception. He told Nathanael that before Philip had called him to come and see, Jesus saw him under a fig tree.

Nathanael apparently had undergone some surpassing spiritual experience while praying, or meditating, or worshipping under a fig tree. The Lord, though absent in body, had been present with Nathanael in spirit. Nathanael then recognized the Savior as the Christ and said, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John 1:49).

Nathanael spoke without guile. The words came from his heart. They



expressed a deep conviction of truth. He followed the Savior.

### Without guile

To be without guile is to be free of deceit, cunning, hypocrisy, and dishonesty in thought or action. To beguile is to deceive or lead astray, as Lucifer beguiled Eve in the Garden of Eden. A person without guile is a person of innocence, honest intent, and pure motives, whose life reflects the simple practice of conforming his daily actions to principles of integrity.

The psalmist wrote, "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile" (Psalm 32:2), and then admonished, "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile" (Psalm 34:13).

In the New Testament, we learn that the Savior was without guile (see 1 Peter 2:22) and that "he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile" (1 Peter 3:10).

In latter-day scriptures, we read that the Lord called Edward Partridge to be bishop for the Church because "his heart is pure before me, for he is like unto Nathanael of old, in whom there is no guile" (D&C 41:11). In another revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith the Lord said, "My servant George Miller is without guile; he may be trusted because of the integrity of his heart; and for the love which he has to my testimony I, the Lord, love him" (D&C 124:20).

These passages of scripture help me understand what the Lord could see in Nathanael, Edward Partridge, and George Miller, and give me some insight into what he expects of the Saints. I believe the Savior was seeking purity of soul in those he called to be his twelve Apostles. When he spoke of being without guile, he referred to something far deeper than outward appearance. He was reaching into the soul, to the very heart of righteousness. He was touching the key to goodness and to the Christlike life.

To be without guile is to be pure in heart—an essential virtue of those who would be counted among true followers of Christ. He taught in the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8; see also 3 Nephi 12:8). He revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith that Zion is the pure in heart (see D&C 97:21) and that a house is to be built in Zion in which the pure in heart shall see God (see D&C 97:10–16).

If we are without guile, we are honest, true, and righteous. All of these are attributes of Deity and are required of the Saints. Those who are honest are fair and truthful in their speech, straightforward in their dealings, free of deceit, and above stealing, misrepresentation, or any other fraudulent action. Honesty is of God and dishonesty of the devil; the devil was a liar from the beginning. Righteousness is living a life that is in harmony with the laws, principles, and ordinances of the gospel.

### The example of little children

As parents know, little children are, by their nature, without guile. They speak the thoughts of their minds without reservation or hesitance as we have learned as parents when they embarrass us at times. They do not deceive. They set an example of being without guile. The Savior taught of this attribute of little children when his disciples asked: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

"And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

"And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:1–4).

On another occasion, he referred again to the purity of children:

"Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

"But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:13-14).

To the Nephites the Savior said, "Ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God" (3 Nephi 11:38).

"He commanded that their little children should be brought.

"So they brought their little children and set them down upon the ground . . . and Jesus stood in the midst; and the multitude gave way till they had all been brought unto him. . . .

"He took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them. . . .

"And . . . angels did minister unto them" (3 Nephi 17:11-12, 21, 24).

What a great responsibility rests with parents to be certain that they do nothing to alter or destroy the guileless innocence of their little ones!

### **Urgency of being without guile**

I believe the necessity for the members of the Church to be without guile may be more urgent now than at other times because many in the world apparently do not understand the importance of this virtue or are indifferent to it. We see and hear reports of fraud and deception in all levels of our society. A few citizens of some nations betray their country by exchanging sensitive information for money, information they have stolen or with which they have been entrusted. The entertainment industry seems to have lost, in large measure, the concept of moral values. Employees falsify expense accounts. These few examples of guile illustrate how pervasive it is.

### **Guile hinders spiritual progress**

Of far greater concern than the outward acts of guile are the inner feelings and the attitudes that motivate them.

Fraud and deception appear to be increasingly acceptable; the only wrongdoing seems to be in being caught. The objective often is to get gain or to profit, regardless of the injury, loss, or damage to others. This attitude is totally contrary to the principles of the gospel. It hinders or thwarts the spiritual progress of anyone afflicted by it. The practice of guile prevents the Holy Ghost from prompting, guiding, and instructing us, leaving us ever more susceptible to the buffetings of Satan. When we break the commandments, we close ourselves to God's influence and open ourselves to Satan's influence.

### **Guile can lead to hypocrisy**

If we practice guile in small matters, we soon can find ourselves entangled in an ever-increasing, unending spiral, because each lie or other deception often requires a larger one to cover the first. Moreover, the practice of guile often leads to hypocrisy, which is the false pretense of virtue or righteousness and pretending to be something that we are not. If we know what is right and profess to live by that knowledge but, in fact, do not, we are hypocrites. The Savior denounced hypocrites in unmistakable language. He declared:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of . . . all uncleanness.

"Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matthew 23:27-28).

To the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord revealed: "Wo unto them that are deceivers and hypocrites, for, thus saith the Lord, I will bring them to judgment. . . .

"[They] shall be detected and shall be cut off, . . . and wo unto them who are cut off from my church, for the same are overcome of the world" (D&C 50:6, 8).

## Be totally free of guile

What are the Latter-day Saints to do? The answer is plain. The Saints are to be absolutely without guile in every aspect of their lives: in their homes and families, Church callings, all business dealings, and, especially, the private and personal parts of their lives into which only they and the Lord see.

I suggest that we look into our hearts and see whether our motives and actions are pure and above reproach and to see whether we are free of deceit and fraud. Perhaps we can ask ourselves a few questions.

Are we totally free of guile in our conversations and associations with our spouses and children so they always know what to expect and always have unquestioning trust and confidence in us?

Are we forthright in our interviews with our bishops and other priesthood leaders?

Are we true to ourselves, our classmates, and our teachers in our schoolwork, even if a little cheating might improve our grades?

Do we do more work than our employers expect or require, and are we always alert for ways to do our work better?

Do we pay our employees fairly for their labors?

Do we file accurate tax returns?

Are we scrupulous in all business transactions to the extent that our associates always know they are being treated fairly and would feel secure if they had no contract?

Are we satisfied with our personal standards of integrity, morality, and honesty? Can we say of ourselves, as Jesus said of Nathanael, that we are without guile?

Some may think the idea of a society without guile is preposterous in this day. If so, it is because of the power Satan has over the hearts of men. With the Lord's help, the Saints can be without guile. Being honest and fair helps rather than hinders success and prosperity. One man of my acquaintance was in a very competitive business for thirty-six years. He always gave full value in service, quality,

and quantity. He paid every debt in full. He never sued anyone and never was sued during those years.

During a recent visit to the land of Chile, we visited people who were without guile almost to the point of possessing the naive innocence of little children. We were humbled and refreshed to be among them. They strengthened our faith in mankind and our hope for the future.

Yes, the Saints can be free of guile—and must be, to be prepared for the Savior's second coming. The Saints can provide a leavening influence and can demonstrate the value of guileless living. As we develop this divine attribute, we can become a shining light to the world. Certainly, we can teach the principles of the gospel and bless the families of the earth by following the perfect example of the Savior as one who is without guile.

## Blessings of a guileless society

Visualize in your mind a society in which all are pure in heart and completely free of deceit and dishonesty. Can you imagine a total absence of contention and disputes, with no one ever attempting to deceive another? How would life be if we always were certain, without question, that what others represent to us is true? Theft would be unknown. We would have little use for jails or prisons, and litigation would be rare. The greatest blessing that would come to a society without guile is the individual, personal inner peace that comes to those who know they are doing right and know their lives are acceptable to the Lord.

## Examples of guileless societies

A society without guile is possible. I cite two examples from the scriptures. The first is the City of Holiness, even Zion, a city in which the inhabitants were pure in heart and dwelt in righteousness. In fact, Zion is the name given by the Lord to his Saints. That city, referred to as the city of Enoch, was taken up into heaven (see Moses 7:18–21). The second example is the society of the Nephites

that lasted for about two hundred years after the resurrected Lord visited and taught them. The following words of inspiration from the Book of Mormon describe this society:

"There were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another.

"And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people. . . .

"There were no robbers, nor murderers, . . . but they were in one, the children of Christ, and heirs to the kingdom of God. . . .

"And how blessed were they! For the Lord did bless them in all their doings; yea, even they were blessed and prospered" (4 Nephi 1:2, 16-18).

These are examples of the goal of perfection that we should strive for, even though we know that we must perfect our lives grace upon grace and line upon line (see John 1:16, 2 Nephi 28:30).

I look to President Ezra Taft Benson as one whose life of service exemplifies the virtue of being without guile.

### Testimony

In closing, I add my testimony at this Easter season to the testimonies of my brethren that the Atonement and Resurrection are real. I am grateful for the blessing they provide of immortality for all and for the possibility of eternal life it offers those who are faithful.

## President Thomas S. Monson

President Benson has suggested that I bear my testimony to you at this time. I am pleased to again express my witness that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, that this work is true, and that happiness comes through serving our Heavenly Father and serving our fellowmen.

If from this conference we can gain a new feeling of closeness to the Savior and

I testify to you that our Heavenly Father lives and that he is the father of our spirits. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He stands at the head of this church. Joseph Smith was the prophet of God through whom the gospel of Jesus Christ was restored in these, the latter days. President Ezra Taft Benson is the Lord's prophet today. He directs this church by revelation. I bear this testimony humbly in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Monson

We have just heard from Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation for all who have provided the music for this great conference—to the Mormon Youth Chorus, the Ricks College Centennial Choir, the men's choir from the Ogden and Mount Ogden regions, and the Tabernacle Choir, and to their conductors and organists.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference, the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to render service, and the ushers and interpreters.

We express appreciation to the local and national press representatives for the coverage given to the conference and to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have given time and facilities to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

a testimony of his divine mission, and on this Easter Sunday if we can, renewed with the spirit of the Resurrection, go forward in looking after His sheep and our family responsibilities and our church duties in a way which will be pleasing to our Heavenly Father, we ourselves will be abundantly blessed.

God bless you, my brothers and sisters, in all of your incomings and

outgoings. May you have peace in your hearts, may you have tranquility in your homes, and may you have the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ in your souls, I ask in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson is feeling a bit weary after having attended and participated in the many sessions of the conference, and therefore has asked that President Gordon B. Hinckley read the

message which President Benson has prepared for us.

I might mention that after President Hinckley has read this message, the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Sweet Is the Peace the Gospel Brings." The benediction will then be offered by Elder Gardner H. Russell of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and this conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

## President Ezra Taft Benson

(Read by President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency)

### President Hinckley

We heard President Benson's strong voice yesterday morning and again last evening, and we were all encouraged by what he said. I am happy to respond to his request that I read the message which he prepared as the closing benediction of this conference.

### Follow the counsel of the Brethren

My dear brethren and sisters, this has been a wonderful general conference of the Church. We have felt a marvelous spirit in all of our meetings.

I commend my brethren of the General Authorities for the excellent addresses they have given. My humble prayer is that all of us will follow the counsel and instruction we have received.

As we have felt the Spirit and made new and sacred resolves, may we now have the courage and fortitude to carry out those resolves.

For the next six months, your conference edition of the *Ensign* should stand next to your standard works and be referred to frequently. As my dear friend and brother Harold B. Lee said, we should let these conference addresses "be the guide to [our] walk and talk during the next six months. These are the important matters the Lord sees fit to reveal to

this people in this day" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1946, p. 68).

May we all go to our homes rededicated to the sacred mission of the Church as so beautifully set forth in these conference sessions—to "invite all to come unto Christ" (D&C 20:59), "yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him" (Moroni 10:32).

### Accomplishing the Church's mission

This grand mission of the Church is accomplished by proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead.

In the next few days, in each of our homes, may we prayerfully consider specific ways we as families and individuals can accomplish this mission. While we still feel the spirit of this great conference and while the words still ring in our ears, let us determine how each of us can be doers of the word and not hearers only (see James 1:22).

### Proclaim the gospel

In proclaiming the gospel, would you prayerfully consider and ponder the following as it applies to you:

As a young man, are you earnestly preparing to serve a full-time mission? The Lord needs every young man between the ages of nineteen and twenty-six worthy, prepared, and excited about serving in the mission field.

As a mature couple, having reared your children, have you prayerfully considered serving a full-time mission? The Lord needs many more couples in the mission field who can love and fellowship and lead people to Christ.

As a single sister, where marriage is not in your immediate future, have you prayed about serving a full-time mission and sought counsel from your parents and your bishop? Our single sisters are serving marvelous missions throughout the world.

Finally, as a member of the Church, do you realize that, as a member-missionary, you have a sacred responsibility to share the gospel with friends and family? The Lord needs every member of the Church having the faith and the courage to set a date to have someone prepared to be taught by the missionaries. Would each member of the Church prayerfully consider this sacred challenge?

### **Perfect the Saints**

Another way we come unto Christ is by perfecting the Saints. How do we accomplish this? One way to help perfect ourselves and our families is by daily reading from the scriptures.

Are we as families and individuals reading daily from the Book of Mormon and using its teachings to bless and perfect our lives and those of our children? I rejoice in the thousands of members who are responding to this invitation and who testify of the blessings they are receiving.

Communicating with our Father in Heaven through prayer also brings a spiritual power and strength found in no other way. Are we praying both morning and night as a family and as individuals?

Again, are we holding family home evenings each week? Your immediate results may seem far from ideal at times, but by holding weekly family home evenings, as we have been counseled, we help to perfect that eternal family unit.

And what about family preparedness? Family preparedness has always been an essential welfare principle in perfecting the Saints. Are each of us and our

families following, where permitted, the long-standing counsel to have sufficient food, clothing, and, where possible, fuel on hand to last at least one year?

### **Redeem the dead**

Finally, let us consider the divine charge to redeem the dead. As you ponder this responsibility, would you give serious consideration to the following:

Have we prepared ourselves to receive our own endowments, and have sealings for our families been performed in the holy temple? By precept and example, our posterity should understand the transcendent importance of marrying the right person in the right place and sealing families for time and eternity.

Also, have we identified and received the ordinances for at least one of our ancestors? All members of the Church should be actively engaged in working on their family histories and receiving the help they need from trained stake and ward temple and family history consultants.

Do we periodically participate in all of the temple ordinances and thus receive the full blessings of vicarious work for our ancestors?

Do we return to the temple often to receive the personal blessings that come from regular temple worship? Prayers are answered, revelation occurs, and instruction by the Spirit takes place in the holy temples of the Lord.

### **Come unto Christ**

Yes, brothers and sisters, the mission of the Church is glorious—to invite all of us to come unto Christ through proclaiming the gospel, perfecting our lives, and redeeming our dead. As we come unto Christ, we bless our own lives, those of our families, and our Father in Heaven's children, both living and dead.

Now, as we conclude this general conference of the Church, I feel to say to you what Alma said to the members of the Church in his day:

"I would that ye should be humble, and be submissive and gentle; easy to be entreated; full of patience and long-suffering; being temperate in all things; being diligent in keeping the commandments of God at all times; asking for whatsoever things ye stand in need, both spiritual and temporal; always returning thanks unto God for whatsoever things ye do receive.

"And see that ye have faith, hope, and charity, and then ye will always abound in good works.

"And may the Lord bless you, and keep your garments spotless, that ye may at last be brought to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the holy prophets who have been ever since the world began. . . .

"And now my beloved brethren, I have spoken these words unto you according to the Spirit which testifieth in me; and my soul doth exceedingly rejoice, because of the exceeding diligence and heed which ye have given unto my word.

"And now, may the peace of God rest upon you, and upon your houses and lands, and upon your flocks and herds, and all that you possess, your women and your children, according to your faith and good works, from this time forth and forever" (Alma 7:23-27).

### Expression of love and testimony

Now, may I express my love for the Latter-day Saints everywhere. There are no better people in all the world.

I pray that we will be obedient to God, learn His will and do it, and, above all, that we will keep the first and great commandment—to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

I testify to you that this is His work, that the kingdom of God has been restored, that Joseph Smith was and is a prophet of the living God, and that the Book of Mormon is truly the word of God.

As your humble servant, I desire with all my heart to do God's will and to faithfully serve you and Him to the end.

Let us all come unto Christ and be perfected in Him, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

To which I add my testimony that these are the words of the Lord's anointed, the prophet of the living God, the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, President Ezra Taft Benson.

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The choir sang "Abide With Me" without announcement, then sang "Sweet Is the Peace the Gospel Brings."

Elder Gardner H. Russell offered the benediction.

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## SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 3, 1988, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States and parts of Canada,

and through other facilities to several points overseas:

**Announcer:** Once more we welcome you within these walls with a program of inspirational music and spoken word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle

Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley conducting the choir, Robert Cundick, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

(Choir: "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today"—Thiman; melody from *Lyra Davidica*)

**Announcer:** With Charles Wesley's jubilant text, the Tabernacle Choir, with Donald Ripplinger conducting, has sung the traditional Easter hymn "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today." On this special day, thoughtful people everywhere have reason to rejoice in the words of the Apostle Paul to the Christian community at Corinth: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:19-20).

And, in the rich imagery of the 23rd Psalm, we read: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. . . . Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (vs. 4-6). A rhymed paraphrase presents these thoughts in an anthem by Harry Rowe Shelley: "The King of Love My Shepherd Is."

(Choir: "The King of Love My Shepherd Is"—Shelley; arr. Scholin)

**Announcer:** Nothing affects us like a funeral. It is there, in the presence of death, that mortal life is seen for what it is: a fragile and momentary voyage between the shores of birth and death.

So it is, so it has been, and so it will be, as long as human hearts cling together, transcending time and geography. From the first human grave of rough-hewn rocks to the most elaborate mausoleum of today, we have struggled with the anguish, the awe, and even the fear of death. We have done so because we know that we, of ourselves, cannot animate the lifeless forms nor restore the spirit to the body.

But our fear is mitigated by events of another time and another place. Somewhere on the outskirts of Jerusalem is a tomb—a tomb different from all other tombs and graves the world over, for this one is empty—it has been empty for nearly two thousand years.

It is the tomb of Jesus—of Him who died and rose again, robbing the grave of its contents, depriving death of its victory; and, with His resurrection, the rebirth of our own dreams and aspiration.

Today, as we might peer into a silk-lined coffin or upon the pallid face of death—of friend or family member—our fear turns to hope; hope in the reuniting of body and spirit; hope in a future meeting; hope for a time when stilled hearts will once again beat, and silenced lips will speak to us once more.

This, then, is the greatest victory of all—the brilliant triumph of eternal love over the foreboding darkness of endless extinction: for it was God's love of us which lit the road to Calvary and rolled the heavy portal from the tomb.

All politics, all art, all philosophy, indeed, all religion point to this one empty tomb; all comes down to this, to this one place in space and time.

Without the Resurrection, all Christianity is meaningless, leading us along a road which leads nowhere, a road which leads to final defeat.

But with it—with that triumphant conquest—death's truer name is progress, and life becomes a road which leads everywhere.

"Death be not proud," wrote the poet, "though some have called thee mighty and dreadful. . . . Thou art not so" (John Donne, *Holy Sonnets* No. X). It is life we celebrate today; it is life we celebrate at Easter, even eternal life for all, because we have placed our hope, our faith, our joy in Him who has put an end to death.

"I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. . . . I was with the Father from the beginning. . . . I am the light and the life of the world" (3 Nephi 9:15, 18).

"Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into



the world. . . . I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world" (3 Nephi 11:10-11).

"[Now you] know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world" (3 Nephi 11:14).

(Choir: "The Resurrected Christ"—Gates)

**Announcer:** We have just heard, with four-hand organ accompaniment, in celebration of the risen Christ, in a dramatic, compelling musical and narrative portrayal by American composer Crawford Gates, "The Resurrected Christ."

And now, at the Tabernacle organ, John Longhurst plays a chorale prelude of J. S. Bach: "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring."

(Organ: "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring"—J. S. Bach)

**Announcer:** At the conclusion of this Easter broadcast, we turn again to the music of Crawford Gates as the choir sings a lyrical setting of "The Song of Mary" with the traditional words of the

Magnificat. That will be followed by "The Lord Is My Shepherd" and "Song of Redeeming Love."

(Choir: "The Song of Mary," "The Lord Is My Shepherd," "Song of Redeeming Love"—Gates)

**Announcer:** Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

**Announcer (on radio):** This concludes the 3,059th performance continuing the 59th year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with station KSL in Salt Lake City.

Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducted the choir, John Longhurst was at the organ, and the Spoken Word was given by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, "Music and the Spoken Word" will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network.

## SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Mormon Youth Chorus, conducted by Robert C. Bowden, furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning session of the conference.

Music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by the Ricks College Centennial Choir, conducted by Florence Bowman.

At the general priesthood session, music was furnished by a men's choir from the Ogden and Mount Ogden regions. Jerry F. Simon conducted the choir.

The Tabernacle Choir, conducted by Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger,

provided music for the Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Throughout the conference sessions, the accompaniments and the prelude, postlude, and interlude music were played on the Tabernacle organ by Robert Cundick, John Longhurst, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

**F. Michael Watson**

Clerk of the conference

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THE CHURCH of  
JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY  
SAINTS